

AINSLEE'S

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVER FICTION

Vol. XI

JUNE, 1903

No. 5

CONTENTS

Cover Design	Will Greff	
Partners	Ethel Watts Mumford	1
Song	Charles H. Crandall	38
A Court of French Claims	Elizabeth Duer	39
A Shepherd in Lesbos	Bliss Carman	47
The Swan	Sarah Guernsey Bradley	49
Spring in the City	John Arbuthnot	57
The Finish of a Devotee	Beatrice Hanscom	58
On Samar Beach	Lucia Chamberlain	63
The Blood of His Ancestors	Henry C. Rowland	64
The Wandering Home	Richard Le Gallienne	72
Jest or Earnest	Austen Hancock	80
Premonitions	Isabelle Howe Fiske	82
The Climax	Katherine C. Thurston	83
The Jealous Mrs. Jeffreys	James Forbes	93
The Dilettante	Edmund Vance Cooke	97
The Hostess, Past and Present	Geraldine Bonner	98
Rogers	John D. Barry	103
June	T. B. Dowd	111
An Angel Unawares	Harvey J. O'Higgins	112
Confessions of a Cheerful Person	Elia W. Peattie	122
The Guerdon	Charlotte Becker	123
Count Andre Listened	Miriam Michelson	124
Simon's Father	Guy de Maupassant	130
The Hidden Pearl	William Hamilton Hayne	134
The Making of a Champion	Roland E. Andrews	135
The Top of the Heap	Edgar Saltus	140
The Woman I Love	Douglas Story	147
When to Write Finis	Helen S. Crowninshield	151
A May Madrigal	Clinton Scollard	156
October and June	S. H. Peters	157
The Smile of the Desert	Cloudesley Johns	158

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, \$1.80

SINGLE COPIES, 15 CENTS

Monthly Publication issued by AINSLEE MAGAZINE CO., 156 Fifth Avenue, NEW YORK.

Copyright, 1903, by Ainslee Magazine Co., New York. Copyright, 1903, by Ainslee Magazine Co., Great Britain. *All rights reserved.*

Publishers everywhere are cautioned against using any of the contents of this Magazine either wholly or in part.

Entered September 11, 1902, at New York as Second-class Matter, under Act of Congress of March 2, 1879.



Life is a Fight in Which the Best Boy Wins

A clear brain, a strong body and pure blood are necessary to success.

MALTA-CERES

THE Health Food.

gives health to brain, muscles and blood, makes life worth living. MALTA-CERES is pre-digested, easily assimilated by the weakest stomach and supplies perfect food to the body.

It's Ready to Eat—Delicious—Unequaled

Sample Package sent **FREE** for your Grocer's Name.

THE TWIN CITY NUT FOOD CO., 2836 Bryant Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

PARTNERS

By Ethel Watts Mumford

Author of "The Flash of an Emerald," "Dupes," Etc.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. LASSAR lay on her lounge before the open fire, bemoaning her fate, while she awaited the arrival of Courtlandt Van Wyn, family friend and mentor.

Her room reflected the self-centered professional invalid, whose outlook upon life in general is one of conventionality largely tinged by family pride.

A number of fine old portraits of her Virginian ancestors gazed down from the walls. Over the mantelpiece a faded coat-of-arms displayed the dragons and vivid quaterings of the Carrolls, beside it hung the newer but no less gorgeous shield and crest of the Lassars—"originally de la Serre, descended from the famous de la Serre, companion of Duguesclin."

Mrs. Lassar's person was only less important to herself than her pedigree. She had once been the toast of Baltimore and Richmond, and had never quite forgotten. Now, though somewhat over forty, her invalid habit had strangely preserved her. The fine white skin, that so rarely came in contact with the elements, had retained all its flower-like delicacy. Her abundant blonde hair failed to show the gray sifted through its luxuriance, while the constant ministrations of her maid, brush in hand to banish the megrims, had also maintained the brilliant softness of this, her chief treasure. Her large blue eyes, set wide apart, were still appealingly innocent, and showed

quite as much illogical incapacity as in the first blush of girlhood.

The maid knocked softly. To attract the attention of her mistress without jarring those delicate nerves required tact little short of phenomenal.

"Come in—who is it?"

"Mr. Van Wyn, madame."

"You may admit him."

The man who waited upon this answer in the formally elegant reception room, was no other than the great Van Wyn, former banker, railroad magnate and mine owner, now retired, with middle age and millions fastened upon him. He was small, slight and quiet. Gentleman in the mass and in detail. His keen, far-seeing mind was balanced by a rare human sympathy, almost painful in its intuitions of pain and misery. He had gone through the soul-destroying mills of business and come out unscathed, with a name so far above reproach that it had become an annoyance to the majority of his colleagues. His face was deeply lined and his hair white, but here the tribute to his fifty-three years ended; his bright, alert eyes and white, strong teeth turning the glass of Time in his favor. He did not appear old, but infinitely experienced, wise and comprehending.

It was evident he anticipated no pleasure in his present visit, for he sighed repeatedly as he walked slowly up and down, and a look of resignation spread over his face as the maid announced that madame expected him. He was conducted to her presence almost reluctantly.

"Oh, Courtlandt," whined Mrs. Lassar, as her eyes fell upon him, "I'm so glad you've come! I knew, of course, you would—you've always been so devoted to the family, though you never did approve of me—"

Mr. Van Wyn made a slight deprecatory gesture. He knew from experience it was unwise to discuss.

"It's Franchesca."

He nodded. It always *was* Franchesca.

"I'm so worried. What *can* I do with her?"

"Let her alone," said Van Wyn with conviction.

The distressed mother rolled her eyes heavenward.

"I don't see *how* you can treat the matter so lightly," she wailed. "You, my father's dearest friend—my own guardian, and you've *pretended* to be devoted to the girl. Oh!" she went on with a moan, "I wanted your help and advice, and you answer me with gibes!"

There is a type of voice beyond measure harassing to the nerves. It is made of tears, fault-finding and willful misunderstanding. This voice Mrs. Lassar possessed.

Her listener winced, but persisted in his defense.

"Let the child alone, Eleanor. She is high strung, nervous, over-bright for her years. Let her have her head. You pester her with rules, regulations, maids, footmen, companions, until she is little short of hysterical. It is a refined form of torture, and is flaying her living nerves."

The lady sat upright in horror.

"Courtlandt!" she exclaimed, "you don't understand these things. A young girl must be accompanied. She cannot be permitted to run the streets. She *must conform* to the rules of well regulated society. What has come over you to suggest *such* a thing?"

"Eleanor, my dear, you forget that you have been, most unfortunately, an invalid for years. You don't know what you call well regulated society is now. I do assure you that your scheme of life is quite too near the standards of 1830 for the needs of the present

generation. You must give Franchesca more liberty. Indeed, she is a girl who should have a profession. She is active, brilliant, original, and you are trying to cramp her every natural emotion."

"You don't know what you are talking about," snapped Mrs. Lassar.

"Evidently," Van Wyn replied, "you sent for me to agree with, not advise you. The first I can't do, the latter you won't have. But, I repeat, you are nagging that girl into nervous prostration or recklessness—and both you and Wendham are blind to the danger."

"Wend won't take the matter up at all. He is so absorbed in his work that nothing reaches his consciousness. I've spoken to him again and again. He merely shrugs his shoulders. Besides, she's only his stepchild—you can't expect it."

"What Franchesca needs is the privilege of being either by herself, or with such companions as she craves," her champion persisted. "As it is, she hasn't a place to call her own. She's tagged after from morning till night, and she is forced to choose her friends from among a number that you select for her. You won't let her attend the art school for fear she may be brought into contact with young women whose mothers you don't happen to know; but you throw her into the society of such a person as Kitty Corlier, for instance, who, both in dress and mind has reached the limit of the *décolletée*, and where Franchesca certainly meets every old and every young *roué* of any social standing in the city. Fortunately you have a daughter whose soul is so far above all of them that she has never appreciated the course of modern Boccaccio and Rabelais to which you have treated her."

There were tears in the maternal eyes and voice.

"Oh, Courtlandt! You are quite, quite insane! How can you talk so! There never was a finer family than the Belvales, and Anthony Corlier was a splendid catch. I don't know what you can mean. Why, I've known Kitty's mother since I was a child!"

"Ah, but you don't know Kitty!"

"Courtlandt, I never knew you to be malicious!"

"I'm not!"

"And you would have me allow my daughter to go to a public art school—get in with that frightful bohemian element!"

"I'm not insisting on that. I said Franchesca ought to have an aim, an ambition, a definite something to strive for."

"I suppose, then," cried Mrs. Lassar, with scornful emphasis, "you will lend the stamp of your approval to this—"

With a dramatic gesture, she drew from under the chair pillows an irregular bundle of paper, scrawled over in a nervous, boyish hand.

"And what, may I ask, may *'this'* be?" He took the papers from her extended hand.

"Read!" she commanded, tragically.

Van Wyn put on his pince-nez.

"Franchesca's hand—oh, verses—that's good."

"Read them, and see for yourself what manner of—poetry—your god-child is perpetrating! There are lines I blush to read—I cannot imagine how a child of mine—"

"Nor can I, Eleanor," he acquiesced. "These strike me as indicating decided talent. When did the child show you these?"

"Show me! Show me!—not she! I went through her desk this morning, and found them."

"You didn't!" exclaimed Van Wyn, aghast.

"And why not? A mother must look after the welfare of her child. Haven't I borne with her, sacrificed myself all the days of my life? Haven't I been the soul of devotion?"

"You are not going to let her know that you did this?" he asked, abruptly.

"Certainly. And you must help me, Courtlandt, when you come to your senses; help me to make her understand that a young girl must *not* express herself after this fashion. Let her write all she wants about birds and flowers

and spring—but, look at her themes! Read those things—it positively frightens me. Read that one, 'Helen and Lethe'—read it."

Van Wyn selected the paper—the reverse of a magazine frontispiece, and read, aloud:

HELEN AND LETHE.

Helen, Helen, Argive Helen,
All thine earthly triumphs o'er;
Wandering, silent, unattended,
On dull Lethe's somber shore.

Now a sad and silent vision,
Lacking power to enjoy;
Thou, upon whose beauty's altars,
Burned the holocaust of Troy.

Even sorrow is denied thee,
And the violence of grief;
Thou who, in thy life's great hazards,
Won and lost, past all belief.

Only ghosts of passion's tenant
Thy great heart, once passion's well;
Now the torrent of its madness
Hardly stirs the asphodel.

Laid upon thy bosom's whiteness,
No more lifted by a sigh—
Thy regrets are dim and drifting
Since the Horae saw thee die.

Phantom Helen, dreaming, listless,
Will not quivering memory raise
To thine eyes the stirring vision
Of those lost and mighty days?

Dost not tremble to remember
That thy beauty's fell desire
Lit the flame, in whose embraces
Sank great Troy 'mid death and fire?

Think what blood in full libation
At thy roseleaf feet was poured!
Think! the reeking, fearful vintage
Of those years of spear and sword!

Even now, pale, careless Helen,
When the world is gray and old,
And its youthful, mad pulsations
Sluggish grown, are slow and cold—

Still thy name can set its heartbeats
Once again to quicker time;
Liven it with straining passions
Of the golden age sublime.

But to thee, oh, Phantom Helen,
All thy soul can know is rest;
Thou hast drunk to Endless Silence
In the Lethe of the Blest.

"Now!" said Mrs. Lassar, "what have you to say to that?"

"That Franchesca is born to great things," he answered after a moment's pause.

"Don't you see what I mean?" the irritated mother complained. "Fie! a young girl—it's monstrous!—I——"

"It's monstrous good!"

"Don't be absurd—suppose it has a proper number of feet, or whatever it is—it's the sentiment. Can't you understand that for a young girl——"

"The sentiment is just what interests me—this seems original——"

"It's indecent!"

"It's nothing of the sort, Eleanor; you are carrying your notions too far."

"Anyway, I hope that she hasn't shown that stuff to any one, I don't know *what* they'd think."

"Think! That she is clever, that she has possibilities. Can't you see that you are starving that child's mind? Can't you see that this vent—her poetry, and good poetry, too, for a girl of her years—is something sacred to her? Don't you realize that if you take her to task in this, you risk antagonizing her for life? Do, pray, be sensible. Put these papers back. Encourage her—let her collect and work over her verses. Submit them to a publisher. Draw her out; she will tell you about them herself. Good heavens, Eleanor! this is a crucial moment—your whole future *entendement*, as the French say, may depend on how you act. Show a little breadth of mind. I can't find words strong enough to impress you with the importance of this. Of course, I know your motives are always without stain. I know you opened her desk because you thought it a duty. But, don't you see that Franchesca will feel that you have done something dishonorable, have taken an—an—an—ungentlemanly advantage? She is probably very sensitive about her verses. Do, pray, put these papers back, and say nothing whatever about it."

Mrs. Lassar burst into tears.

"You accuse me of being dishonorable," she sobbed. "I, who am the soul of honor!"

The unfortunate man writhed nervously on his chair. He was miserably sympathetic with both sides, and he hated "scenes."

"My dear girl," he begged, "do be just. I meant nothing of the sort. I said that from Franchesca's point of view——"

Mrs. Lassar dried her tears angrily.

"What right has she to a point of view? When I was a girl my mother opened and read every letter that ever came into the house. I submitted my journal to her every evening before retiring. I concealed nothing from her."

In spite of himself, Van Wyn smiled. "And do you mean to tell me your journal was the unfettered outpouring of your young soul? You never kept anything back?"

A sob cut him short. "Now you doubt my word. What has come over you, Courtlandt, that you turn against your lifelong friends?"

He rose stiffly.

"Eleanor, I can't argue with you. I have told you what I think—if you don't listen——"

"I must do my duty," the invalid reiterated.

He gathered up his hat and gloves, and with grave, old-fashioned courtesy bowed himself from the room.

Mrs. Lassar sank back among her pillows, determination written large upon her high-bred face. She had greatly desired Courtlandt's backing in the war she felt compelled to wage against her rebellious daughter, but, failing that, she was no whit deterred from opening the campaign. It was a matter of duty, and she never allowed anything to interfere with the fulfillment of its demands. She was, moreover, completely convinced of her infallibility—a condition of mind immensely comforting to its fortunate possessor.

She reached the bell on the teak wood stand beside her couch, and gave it a determined whack. The maid appeared.

"Tell Miss Franchesca that I wish to see her."

CHAPTER II.

Francesca received the message with a wry face.

"I'll come at once," she said, rising. She stood for a moment before the cheval glass, straightened her skirts, smoothed her hair, and assured herself that there were no buttons missing anywhere. Mrs. Lassar demanded immaculate neatness.

Francesca resembled her mother strikingly, but was also a decided improvement—a fact that the elder lady noticed and resented. Francesca's eyes were clear, almost green in color, flecked with amber lights, infinitely alluring and changeable. Francesca's mouth was large, red and mobile. Francesca was strong, well proportioned, and carried herself almost rebelliously erect.

And for the rest, the beautiful hair, fine skin, delicate hands and feet, the straight, well modeled nose, for which Eleanor Carroll had been famous, were possessed in absolute duplicate by her daughter.

The girl nerved herself. She was utterly helpless before her mother's torrent of reproaches and tears. The slightest attempt at justification was invariably met with further recriminations that extended into the dim past—recording the errors of Francesca's babyhood, mounting thence to details of all her unfortunate inheritance on her father's side, closing with a tirade against Fate, and the sorrows of an invalid afflicted by an unnatural daughter, whose one aim it was to make herself conspicuous and overstep the rules of good behavior."

It was with a flinching of her sensitive nature that Francesca entered her mother's room.

"You want to see me?" she said, as she closed the door.

"See that no one is eavesdropping," said Mrs. Lassar, in sepulchral tones.

Francesca reopened the door and obediently glanced down the hall.

"No one there," she said, shortly.

Mrs. Lassar indicated a straight-

backed, mahogany chair with a wave of her jeweled hand.

"This is no ordinary matter," she began slowly, as Francesca seated herself awkwardly. "It is my duty, my painful duty, to see that you grow up a respectable woman, a credit to your name, and to mine. Unfortunately, I am met by a persistent resistance to all good advice. Apparently you do not care what becomes of you. You have no pride. I cannot understand how a child of mine can be so without all idea of decency or propriety. It breaks my heart, while it mortifies me more deeply than I can put into words."

She paused.

Francesca twisted uneasily, and began a mental enumeration of all the possible shortcomings that might be the cause of her present interview. She remembered no misdemeanor sufficiently grave to warrant this, her mother's "third degree" manner.

"I'm sure I'm sorry, whatever it is," she blurted out; "but I can't think of anything I've done lately."

Mrs. Lassar laughed, a heart-broken, disillusioned laugh.

"I hardly expected you to confess," she went on. "That would be too much to expect in this day and generation. What girl would be open and frank with her mother? Even Courtlandt says that is *passée*—1830. But let me tell you it is impossible for you to conceal anything from me. I am your mother, and much as it may try me, weak and ill as I am, I must do my duty, I must stay your feet on the threshold of mistakes (to only call them that), that may ruin your whole life and make you an outcast from society. I refer to these." She withdrew the bundle of papers from between the pillows, and held them up accusingly.

Francesca's face went white, then flushed slowly over throat and ears up the roots of her hair, a wave of outraged crimson.

"Mother!" she gasped, rising to her feet, a very tempest of mortification and anger flaming from her dilated eyes.

"Sit down!" said Mrs. Lassar, sarcastically. "Surely the authoress of

such erotic 'poems' must cultivate better self-control, or who knows what may become of her?"

The girl sank down, protesting.

"I didn't want any one to see them," she said, with difficulty. "They were my very own, they were not for any one to read. You broke into my desk, and went through my papers! You've no right—no right to do such a thing!"

"No right! Franchesca, don't you dare speak to me—to your mother, like that!"

"I will speak!" insisted Franchesca, passionately. "You had no right to do that! Give me my papers—my papers! Am I never, never to have anything of my own—not even my brains? I tell you, mother, I can't stand it—I won't stand it!"

"You are an impertinent, incorrigible girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Lassar, beside herself with anger. "Mr. Lassar shall be told of this to-night."

"It's none of Mr. Lassar's business. I won't have you talk me over with him; he's not my father—I'm no kin to him. You shan't shame me like that!"

"I will do what I think right—I will show him these." Again Mrs. Lassar flourished the papers threateningly.

Franchesca snatched the crackling bundle from her mother's hand.

"You shan't!" she said, slowly.

It was no longer the helpless, self-conscious girl, but the outraged woman who spoke. She tore the papers across once, twice, thrice, threw the fragments into the grate, where they flamed gayly for a moment, and, turning, faced her mother.

"Leave the room at once!" commanded Mrs. Lassar in tones that quivered. "You have insulted me, laid violent hands upon me, defied me! Go to your room, and stay there until you are ready to beg my pardon on your knees. I shall be ill after this, perhaps I shall die. I'm sure I hope I shall—and I know you do. You could then lead the reckless, lawless life you seem to crave. But, while I live, you shall not disgrace your name. I will do my duty to the end! Go!"

Franchesca's heart smote her. Her

mother's illness was always a strong plea.

"I didn't mean to be rough." She hesitated, but the memory of her own wrongs brought the blood to her cheeks again. She walked quickly across the room to the door.

"Where are you going?" demanded Mrs. Lassar. "Come here to me!"

The girl hesitated a moment, but obeyed, her heart pounding painfully.

"Have you any more of that disgraceful twaddle?" Mrs. Lassar had been worsted, but she still had the whip in hand.

Franchesca did not answer.

"If you have, I do not ask you to bring them to me—I have been outraged enough—I command you to tear up and burn every line—do you understand?—and never let me hear of such things again. There are plenty of beautiful and proper subjects a girl may write about, and it is quite needless to rake gutters for material."

Franchesca's shoulders shrugged imperceptibly. She knew her mother's hysterical habit of exaggeration and misstatement. Nevertheless, every word burned and rankled.

Mrs. Lassar had recourse to tears, and when she cried, she had a knack of looking very frail and pathetic.

"May I go?" asked Franchesca, trying hard for self-control.

Mrs. Lassar sobbed on.

Franchesca waited an age-long moment. Turning, she walked to the door.

"Franchesca!" exclaimed the invalid with intent to detain. The girl half turned, then quickly opened the door and fled down the passage.

Franchesca reached her room and threw herself down in the chair before her desk. The sight of the familiar pens, pencils and paper revived her anger. Two hot tears of mortification scalded her eyelids and slid slowly down her cheeks.

There is a mental modesty that is keener and more exacting than any physical sensation, a shame of spiritual uncovering that is more painful than physical exposure, and the girl's out-

raged soul cried out in shrinking misery.

It was impossible to explain, impossible to reason. She throbbed and blushed without knowing why, but with a sick consciousness that—never could she forgive. Between her mother and herself the chasm had opened. She had always, unconsciously, realized their fundamental antagonism of character. She had tried to do as was required in spite of the tugging of her nature at its galling leash. She had always accepted duty and obedience as they had been held up to her, although woman enough to realize how far afield were her mother's standards from the requirements of the rest of the world.

Now, all barriers crumbled, all feeling of obligation melted. Recklessness rose from the chaos—fierce and hot, with all her strong youth and her rare endowments, intoxicating her.

As Courtlandt had foreseen, the moment had been a crucial one. And now, the elements in Mrs. Lassar's tactless hands, had sprung together and created a new world—a flaming mass of vast portent for good or ill—and none might see the end.

Franchesca was not conscious of the extent of the change that had taken place. After a few moments of exquisite misery, she found herself wonderfully cool. What was the use of self-torment? Rebellion began its slow, insidious demand for excitement. She shrugged her shoulders again, as if throwing off a load.

"I shall go my own way—that's all," she said aloud.

She washed the tears from her face, smoothed her hair, and put on her hat. She would go to Kitty's. It must be about time for tea. She found her jacket and gloves, and, dreading every moment lest the maid appear, found her way to the hall door.

The butler saw her.

"Don't you want William, miss?" he asked, surprised to see her unattended.

"No," she said with decision. "If Mrs. Lassar should desire to know, you may tell her that I have gone to Mrs. Corlier's. No, you needn't send any

one; Mrs. Corlier will see that some one comes home with me."

There was a new decision and independence in her movements, in her pounding blood—the impulse that sends a colt bolting madly to its own hurt.

She walked briskly to the big mansion a few blocks below, where Mrs. Corlier, the fashionable young married flirt of the year, held high court, and expended in lavish entertainment the wealth of her infatuated husband.

The Corliers were family friends of whom Mrs. Lassar approved for reasons genealogical, social and pecuniary. With them Franchesca was more than welcome, her beauty and her intelligence making her a decided drawing card, in spite of the fact that a warning finger raised to Kitty's rouged lips often caused a hasty change of conversation upon her favorite's arrival.

As the butler ushered Franchesca into the softly lit music room, just such a quick change was perceptible. She saw it, and her new mood answered.

"Why did you stop the story?" she demanded, a challenge in her voice.

Kitty felt the unfamiliar magnetism at once, and wondered.

"Oh, there you are, Fran. Awfully glad. You know everybody, I believe. Oh, no, you haven't met Mr. Goreing. Allow me—Miss Cross, this is Mr. Goreing. Sit over here—tea, dear? What have you been doing?"

"Having a scene with mother," said Franchesca, flippantly, unhooking her chinchilla collar. She was unutterably surprised at herself, not being given to speaking of herself or her family affairs. In fact, she had always hated Kitty's rather more than frank avowals of all her private business from cooks to flirtations.

Her hostess looked up. By no means a fool, she was quick to realize that a great and sweeping change had taken place in her friend.

"Dreadful things, scenes," she said, quickly. "There now, you shall have a double dose of rum in your tea—nothing so soothing."

Franchesca had a word and a smile

for each of the smartly dressed men in the circle about the table, and let her glance rest upon Mr. Goreing, who found himself beside her. He was somewhere over the quarter century, ugly to handsomeness, bearing the marks of dissipation with a careless grace that became him. The power of Franchesca's mood struck fire at once. At another time even her physical beauty would have left him cold. It required more than that to rouse his *blasé* interest. But Franchesca, vibrant from recent battle, Franchesca, excited, passionate, was no longer herself—but a destructive force. At another time his old-young face and easy familiarity would have been repugnant to her. Now it was attractive. She sipped her tea absently for a moment.

"Our hostess brews very nice knock-out drops, doesn't she?" said Goreing in a voice of peculiar sweetness, and a tone that seemed to isolate him and his hearer from all the rest.

She looked over the rim of her cup, her pupils dilating till her green eyes seemed almost black.

"Yes," she said. "They are so bad for me that I fairly dote upon them."

"That's usually the way," he answered. "May I get some more for you?"

"Not yet. See, I have not finished this dose." She tilted the cup toward him.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, with mock consternation. "Let me see—you have a most complicated fortune. Permit me." He leaned close. "You meet a stranger who will follow you. Here is a large heart—quite perfect—very unusual for a heart. You are about to change the whole current of a man's life."

Franchesca put down the cup and turned on him somewhat scornfully.

"You don't seem to be the sort of a man who is old maidish."

He looked at her whimsically.

"One doesn't have to read tea leaves to prophesy what I've just told you. There are the eyes—stars, I mean—I'm an astrologer."

She laughed. "But you said there was a large and perfect heart."

"Well, I ought to know. Whose heart did you think I meant?"

"Why, mine, of course."

"And yours is in bad condition?"

"I'm not at all sure that I have one."

"Good gracious! How fortunate. That's proof positive it is in good preservation."

"Who's in good preservation?" asked Kitty, interrupting.

"He says my heart must be in perfect order because I am unconscious of the possession of one," said Franchesca, seriously.

"You may take his word," said Colby Van Rensselaar. "It is his specialty."

"Don't give me away to Miss Cross," said Goreing.

"I did not say I'd take you even as a gift, did I?"

Again Franchesca was startled. She had met this man but a few moments before, yet she was permitting herself a new, a not altogether warranted attitude.

There was a quick laugh.

Goreing pulled out his watch.

"You're not going?" exclaimed Kitty.

"Don't let her frighten you."

"Oh, no," he answered, cheerfully.

"It isn't that, but with such a break in my stock I thought I had better glance at the ticker."

"Five and three-quarters," said Van Rensselaar, looking over his shoulder. "What a 'bear' Miss Cross would make!"

"How do you know?" interrupted Franchesca, boldly, "that I'm not manipulating that stock for the purpose of taking it all up myself at a low figure?"

"I haven't a low figure," he protested.

"I'm six feet one inch—but you can have all the stock. I'm sure the few who have holdings will be glad to unload."

"Mrs. Trevis," announced the butler.

A handsome young woman, as artfully draped and painted as a modern boudoir, made her appearance. There were introductions and a rapid fire of questions; Goreing, taking advantage

of the moment, placed himself between Franchesca and the animated group.

"Come over to the big sofa and talk to me, won't you?" he begged, in an undertone. "When I find a woman who has personality and charm, I want her to myself. Here, let me take your cup."

She suffered herself to be led to the deep colonial sofa, and was soon lost in conversation with her new conquest.

Kitty glanced over the semicircle of her visitors.

"Did you ever in all your life!" she demanded.

"Ever what? I think I've done *most* things," murmured Mrs. Trevis.

"Why, Franchesca Cross, of course—oh, you weren't here, and didn't see—but, my dear, you know how reserved she is, and the way we all stand around? Well, positively, she rushes in this afternoon, makes flippant remarks about her sacred mamma, talks our very own jargon back to us, and then, with all the manner of the most accomplished flirt in Christendom, proceeds to snatch Mr. Goreing, my very newest and best, right from under my nose—and it's a good nose, too," she observed, running a speculative finger over its *retroussé* tip.

"Put out of joint," said Van Rensselear.

"Well," Mrs. Trevis remarked judicially, "I'm very glad to hear it—not about your nose, my dear, you know—but Franchesca, I've always said, is of the stuff of which a belle is made, only she has never found herself. Perhaps she has awakened to the knowledge of her charm. In which case I shall go home and lock up my laurels in the safe deposit vault."

"I'll make tea of mine," said Kitty—"at least I will feel assured of their proper burial. How do you feel about it, Mr. Elting? Goreing is one of your chums. Do you think this is serious?"

"Hardly," he answered, smiling. "But he doesn't as a rule fancy *débutantes*. He prefers Spanish cooking as against the undeniably excellent but tasteless recipes of the boarding school. He's playing up, though—watch him."

"He has a wonderful method," said Van Rensselear, dreamily, "and it's worthy of observation. But I must be wending."

"So must I," sighed Mrs. Trevis. "If you are going home, Van, I'll give you a lift—it's right on my way; I'm due for a moment at the Shelter Bazaar. Good-by, Kitty—good-by." She nodded to the rest and swept out, followed by Van Rensselear.

"Heavens! how obvious!" exclaimed Kitty, maliciously. "Teddy, just for fun—run down to Sherry's and see if she turns up at the Bazaar. I'll wager she doesn't. They'll take a little drive in the park instead. I wonder if she really means to take Van. For my part, I can't see how a widow ever makes up her mind to marry again. It's awful to achieve widowhood, but having arrived at that condition—dear me! why can't we all be born widows? Go on, Teddy, run down to Sherry's, and see—do, please, I'm dying of curiosity. Report at tea to-morrow."

The young man addressed arose with alacrity. He was young, and at the messenger-boy stage of adoration.

Kitty turned to the remaining guests. "Mr. Elting, do tell me, what *was* all that talk about Goreing's fuss at the Waldorf—I've heard the strangest things."

"Oh, nothing," he answered, lightly. "I believe there was a little disturbance down there the other night. Tracy happened to be in bar—but he didn't have anything to do with it. You mustn't believe all you hear, Mrs. Corlier."

"But I prefer to!" exclaimed Kitty with warmth.

"Mr. Van Wyn," announced the butler.

Franchesca started almost guiltily, and Mrs. Corlier raised her shapely head in surprise. Courtlandt Van Wyn was not a teafaring man.

"How nice!" she murmured, extending her plump little hand in friendly greeting. "But you look the least bit tired. Do have some tea."

Courtlandt bowed. He disapproved of Kitty, but enjoyed her society.

Franchesca rose.

"I want you to meet my guardian, Mr. Goreing," she said. "He is the most charming man I know."

"Ah, Fran," exclaimed Van Wyn, warmly, "I thought I should find you here. Mr. Goreing." He bowed with marked reserve. Turning his attention to Franchesca, he watched her intently as the conversational ball tossed across the table. His sharp, clear eyes diagnosed her troubled state instantly. "It's just as I expected," he thought—"they've had it out, and Eleanor has behaved like the simpleton she is. My poor little girl is sore and bitter—confound it all! I hope she hasn't taken a fancy to Goreing just because she's desperate and miserable. He's the sort to push himself forward and be amusing."

"Are you going anywhere this evening?" he asked Franchesca.

She nodded. "Yes. There's a dance at Claitowns."

"Are you to be there?" exclaimed Goreing; "then I am. I did tell Amy that I despised débutante Cinderellas; but she'll let me take it all back."

"Ah," said Courtlandt, quietly. "It will be my pleasure to chaperon Miss Cross and the half dozen maids and things who usually form her train. I'm going to the club to-night to meet some old friends, ten o'clock; may I call for you, Franchesca?"

She nodded.

"H'm!" commented Kitty to herself, "so that's the reason Van Wyn came in to tea. The report of the scene with mamma must have traveled fast—wonder what it was? Aunt Eleanor is such a back-number. Suppose old Van Wyn will try to corral Fran now that she is really beginning to wake up—it's too provoking!"

"Why bother?" she said, aloud. "I'm going, and I'll stop for you, my child. That will save everybody trouble, and Mrs. Lassar doesn't mind trusting her precious baby to me, you know."

Courtlandt's face remained impassive. He could not combat this obviously correct arrangement, yet he was bitterly disappointed. He had counted upon

the long, quiet drive to bring Franchesca's sore heart in confidence to him.

"That will be very nice," said Franchesca, as rising, she threw a kiss at Kitty. "I must be going now."

Courtlandt rose also.

"*Au revoir*, then, both of you, till this evening." The portières closed behind the ill-assorted pair. "You needn't look so disappointed," said Kitty, aside to Goreing, her eyes twinkling. "I'll take the brougham, and, if you arrive here promptly, you may come with us and occupy the little front seat. Now, don't you think I'm the most unselfish woman you ever saw?"

CHAPTER III.

Van Wyn went home distressed and wretched. Franchesca he idolized with all the strength of his deep, sympathetic nature. And Franchesca was suffering and in danger.

In some subtle way he felt himself to have inherited her father's place. He was the only one in her environment who understood her. Mrs. Lassar was—he owned it painfully—impossible. Mr. Lassar—he shrugged his shoulders.

Kitty's circle, into which Mrs. Lassar confidently thrust her daughter—Van Wyn's brow darkened. Yet, after all, if Kitty wasn't Franchesca's friend and companion, she was a picturesque member of society, well enough in her way—but—He went to bed feeling depressed.

Meanwhile, in the great white and gold ballroom of the Claitown mansion a new and totally unexpected comet was blazing in the firmament of Belledom, collecting in its train the most eligible and sought-after men, no matter what their "age, complexion or previous condition of servitude."

Havoc was widespread, and Franchesca made ten enemies and a score of beaux during the one evening. Suddenly blossoming from the reserved, quiet indifference of her former manner, she was magnetic, piquante, provocative. With the irrepressible Kitty she made their supper corner a cynosure for all eyes.

Yet, when on her return, her sleepy maid proceeded to the usual unlacings and unhookings, Franchesca, her hectic gayety gone, felt vaguely annoyed with herself, vaguely conscience-stricken. The feeling vanished as, fresh and sore, came back the memory of her afternoon's humiliation. Tired as she was, she could not sleep, but fretted through the small hours till dawn, bitter and rebellious.

She came down the next morning to late Sunday breakfast, unrefreshed and miserable. Mrs. Lassar met her with a disapproving silence through which pierced a note of coming triumph. The reason became apparent when Mr. Lassar, putting down his paper, adjusted the glasses upon his round, apoplectic nose and addressed his stepdaughter.

"I wish to speak with you in the library," he said, with a glance at his wife, who turned away her head with an assumption of tactful inattention.

The culprit felt her hands grow cold and her face blush hot.

"Has my mother——"

"Remember the servants," Mrs. Lassar admonished.

Franchesca waited till the door of the butler's pantry closed.

"Is it about my—writing?" she demanded, her voice shaking.

He nodded.

"Your mother feels it my duty to speak with you; but this is not the time nor the place."

She pushed back her chair.

"I cannot see that it concerns you, Mr. Lassar," she said, coldly. "I must beg you to excuse me from this interview."

She rose and left the dining-room hastily, tears of mortification breaking from her smarting eyes. Locking herself in her room she sat down wearily.

"I don't know what to do!" she said aloud, "I don't know what to do!"

A light tap at the door and the situation solved itself.

"Mr. Van Wyn is at the door with the victoria, miss, and wants you to drive."

She gasped with relief.

"I'm coming at once, Elise," she called, hastily struggling into her wraps. "Thank goodness!"

She flew down the steps and out to the street, her expressive face still convulsed with suffering.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" she exclaimed as she settled herself beside him.

"What's wrong with my 'partner' this morning?" he asked, giving her the pet name of her childhood.

"I was up too late and didn't sleep," she answered. She could not bring herself to speak of her trouble.

He was disappointed at her reticence.

"The air and sunshine will do you good, then. Everything is bright as new money this morning. Lean back and rest."

They sped up the avenue, thronged with pedestrians, bobbing hansoms and flashing carriages. The air was sweet with church bells and brilliant with moist sunlight. Gradually the regular beat of the horses' feet, the rattle of chains and harness, and the swift, gentle motion soothed her into quiet. They entered the park, beautiful with its winter lace-work of bare trees.

"This is my church, little girl," Van Wyn said softly. "I'm too old to confine my legs and what mind I have left in a pew. Do you realize, Partner, that the senior member of this firm will soon turn the sixty mark?"

She shook her head.

"You'll never be old—you haven't an old nature."

"Old and rheumatic, my dear," he went on. "My doctor tells me that I must be careful and follow a very rigid discipline if I want to live long enough to see my Pal here settled down and well started in business. You see, I've had so much experience in this long life of mine that I feel I could help a beginner a great deal. I've been through all sorts of mills, and not come out ground fine, either. There is always a way to meet situations—only sometimes the beginner loses his head. He meets a trouble and magnifies it out of all true proportion. Or he meets a something with great possibilities of harm which he fails to realize. I wish you

V
1
1
5
J
U
N
O
3
XUM

would rely on me, Pal, and tell me all that bothers you—and—you're not quite yourself these days."

Francesca gulped. "Mother and I——" she began lamely, then stopped abruptly. Mrs. Lassar had instilled into her daughter her own firm belief that Courtlandt Van Wyn had always been in love with her, but had been too shy, too devoted to the memory of his friend to ask her hand in marriage. This flashed into Francesca's mind and checked her utterance. Of course, then, when it came to a question between her mother and herself he would side against her. Besides, she couldn't tell this man whose chivalrous nature she knew so well, that the woman he had worshiped all these years had—well—broken into that desk, and violated its contents. No, she would keep her own counsel.

"What's the trouble?" the kind voice of her would-be confessor urged.

"Oh, nothing much. I dare say mother is right; but I hate to have Mr. Lassar brought into things—it mortifies me so!"

Courtlandt started, amazement and indignation written large upon his face. Never had he fully realized that obvious possibility. He sat silent for a moment, then stretching out his hand, he found Francesca's tightly clinched fist, and patted it tenderly.

"You poor little girl!" he said, softly, "you poor little girl!—I understand, dear—and it's hard!"

She looked away, but her hand relaxed and her slim fingers twined affectionately about his hand.

He sat still, lost in thought. What could he do? Talk with Eleanor? Would that do any good? If only some other surroundings could be found. He began to plan. He might ask his old friend, Mrs. Boardman, to invite Francesca to Palm Beach. Mrs. Lassar would be delighted. The Boardmans' social position was most enviable. Eleanor was a snob—if the truth must out. He smiled.

"I think I see a way—for at least a temporary relief," he said. "Don't be too blue—we'll plan."

"You see, it hurts me," she said softly, "because, you know, I've very little money of my own. Mother has all that father left, and I have to share the house and all that Mr. Lassar pays for. I suppose I should be grateful—because—of course we have everything—and there isn't anything I could do to make a living, I suppose. I'm not trained for it."

A whole book of helplessness and humiliation opened before Courtlandt's sympathy. What must dependence mean? He suddenly comprehended what millions upon millions of women the world over have endured, and will always endure. Well, it shouldn't last forever. He thought of his will lying waiting in the great steel safe. That would lift all such terrors. Why not settle it upon her now? He understood the impossibility. Such a thing could not be proposed to Mrs. Lassar. What reason could he give for such an offer—the Lassar household was prosperous—and besides, it wouldn't do for Francesca's own sake. Still, if he didn't take such confoundedly good care of himself, he might hurry it along.

"The proper place for a young woman is with her mother"—he could fairly hear Mrs. Lassar lay down the law. There was no escape. Marry?—no, Francesca simply must not wreck her life by an early marriage—anything but that. She had not reached her growth. She was all promise, all possibility. She must find herself before she found her mate.

He smiled upon her reassuringly.

"Don't worry, learn philosophy early. You'll live to be two hundred if you can master it before you are twenty-five."

She sighed.

"I think I'll die early then." She laughed mirthlessly. "I'm afraid I don't acquire knowledge readily."

He shook his head.

"Keep your mind open and receptive, anyway. You see this world is the sort of old-fashioned school, where the pupils, if they don't learn, are roundly and soundly punished. Wisdom is that which assimilates the knowledge while avoiding the compulsion."

She looked up into his kind eyes with infinite trust.

"Oh, Partner," she said, "I don't know what I'd do without you! Of course, all my troubles are really small things, I suppose, but they hurt just as much—and you understand. I wish—yes, I do wish you'd married my mother instead of Mr. Lassar."

Courtlandt jumped.

"Oh, my goodness me! What an idea!" he exclaimed, startled.

"Why didn't you?" she mourned. Then contrite that she had touched upon what must be a sore place in her companion's heart, she added, hastily, "You're so terribly nice, you know."

A dozen whimsical expressions chased themselves over his mobile face. He was vividly picturing himself by the side of the fretful, stubborn, illogical invalid, and wondered how long the philosophy he had been so highly lauding would have stood the strain.

"Let's just imagine that you are my daughter," he chuckled; "that's more to my liking. I'm afraid I never should have filled Eleanor's ideals." He paused, and his memory brought before him the brilliant, mobile face of Egerton Cross.

"Your own father, girlie!—(I wish to Heaven he had lived!)—was just about the truest, finest gentleman who ever drew breath—and—you are all your father, dear."

They drove on in silence, their hands clasped under the fur robes.

"Spare me a little longer for this child's sake," he prayed, softly, "and these poor, lean years shall be the best and most useful of my life."

CHAPTER IV.

"H'm!" said Kitty, cogitating, as she balanced a piece of sugar on the shining nose of her French bulldog. "H'm!" Her brows were drawn together in a puzzled frown, most unusual for the frivolous and debonair lady. The dog tossed the sugar and caught it dexterously.

"Fie! fie!" said his mistress in mild

reproof, "gentlemen must not be so greedy. When you yawn, Boul Miche, put your paw before your mouth like a well-bred dog." Her attention wandered. "Wonder," she said. Leaning forward, she picked up a magazine from the table, where her late breakfast lay temptingly spread. The book opened of itself at a page whereon, with much bordering and decoration, three short verses met the eye.

"APHRODITE'S TEARS"

"By FRANCESCA CROSS.

"Into the earth her tears soaked down,
And grew up a poppy, every one,
With a heart of passion and sleep—"

read Kitty.

"So, Fran's turned literary, has she? I wonder how Aunt Eleanor will take it. Don't imagine she'll be pleased with the theme. It's awfully good, though. Wonder if she's seen it?"

A tap at the door, and Anthony Corlier, an amiable, blonde giant of five-and-thirty, entered the room. He paused a moment with an admiring glance at his wife who, in her elaborate pink *négligée*, made a picture to delight a Parisian genre painter.

"Boodle," she said, gravely, "where have you been? I haven't seen you in a blue moon or a green age."

He settled himself comfortably in a deep chair.

"May one smoke?" he inquired, dreamily.

She nodded.

"Yes—kindly throw your ashes into the fireplace, not on my nice carpet. Now, 'fess up."

"Well," he answered, slowly, "lots of places. Van Rensselaar, Tracy Goreing, Gwynn and I went in Clayton's Panhard to Bolton's place on Long Island. He's got a cracker-jack of a plant there, Kitty. We expected, as I told you, to get back in the evening, but Bolton had a crowd over for dinner—awfully good bunch, too—lots of 'em go down for over Sunday, you know, all the year around."

Kitty raised a quizzical eyebrow.

"Poker?" she inquired.

"M'm, yes," he admitted. "It got late so early that we all staid over night. Then, yesterday morning we didn't get up till twelve, so we started home after luncheon. Struck town about five. Goreing left us—got a telegram about something—rest of us went to dinner at Delmonico's. Toby wanted to go to the theatre, so we got a box. Then I came home. House all quiet, so I thought I'd not disturb you. Now, are you satisfied, my lady?"

Kitty smiled good-humoredly.

"Oh, yes, I see you killed time after your own fashion. But do you know Tom Goreing has been telephoning here, trying to find out if you or any one knew where his brother is? I told William to tell him I'd have you call him up as soon as you put in an appearance."

"Oh!" said Corlier. "Sorry. Said he was going home. Wonder where he went? Nothing could have happened, I suppose?"

Kitty tantalized Boul Miche with another lump of sugar—but her eyes had grown grave.

"Boodle," she said, slowly, "I wish you'd drop Goreing, or make him pull up a bit—one or the other."

Her husband looked up surprised.

"Since when? I had an idea that you liked him. He used to be here all the time."

Kitty frowned. "Yes—but—well—he goes too far. There are limits, you know. Goreing has been making himself conspicuous, noisy, unpleasant, and—I don't like the way he has been devoting himself to Fran for the last three months."

"Dear me! Why, I should say that was just the thing. She'd be balance wheel for him."

Kitty's expressive left eyebrow went up.

"You don't know the new Franchesca."

"You're crazy. I've known Franchesca almost as long as you have. She's serious, idealistic, reserved, steady—just the person to pull Goreing up, and he's a corking good sort at bottom."

His wife looked at him pityingly.

"What a shame," she murmured, "that a man of your size and appearance should be so hopelessly unintelligent! I suppose the cataclysmic changes in Franchesca this winter have entirely escaped your notice."

"Dear me, what's up?" he asked, mildly. She hasn't turned out a society flirt and developed a 2.8 1-4 gait, has she?"

"Just about that! I've been put to it to keep up with her."

"Is she in love with Goreing?"

Kitty leaned back among her sofa pillows.

"I really don't know. Either she's trying to blind herself with excitement, or she is giving an excellent imitation of infatuation. She doesn't seem to care for the *On Dit* at all. I don't believe she realizes the stir and talk she is making. Goreing is fascinating and talented—but God help the woman he marries! and I don't want Franchesca to need divine assistance."

Corlier sat silent a moment.

"Now that I think of it," he said at last, "I'd hate to see her mixed up with him—Goreing, I mean. He's all right with the men, you know, but—"

"He's in love with her," said Kitty, judicially.

"Oh, well, there are schools and schools of others."

"If it were any one but Fran I wouldn't care," she observed, as if half ashamed of her conventional attitude. "Most of the girls could take their chances, and he'd be taking as many as they took—but—I don't know—I'm the least bit silly about that girl."

"You're a little trump!" he said, affectionately.

"Have you seen this?" She handed him the magazine.

He read the verses, his eyes widening with amazement.

"Jolly!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know she had it in her."

"Didn't you?"

Again he looked up, puzzled by her tone.

"She has lots more than that in her, but I didn't know she had the faculty of expressing it. She has—what shall I

call it?—force, imagination, the kind of character that makes history—only—oh, well, you know the Lassar household—I'm afraid she may make very exciting, tragic history, if somebody doesn't look out." She was silent a moment. "You had better telephone to Tom—he may be worrying."

Corlier rose, and as he passed, stooped to kiss his wife.

She submitted with an absent-minded pat on his smooth-shaven cheek.

"You're such an old goose, Boodle," she murmured. "I'm most nervous and uneasy," she went on to herself, her eyes fixed unseeing upon the glittering silver on her breakfast tray. "What possessed Fran to send her poems, anyway? She might know there'd be no end of a fuss at home. It's a shame to keep that girl down the way they do. She isn't like the rest of them, or the rest of us, either. Lassar is such an old ass of a busybody—oh, dear! Boul Miche, what a blessing it is to be a dog! I don't believe you appreciate all your advantages." For a full ten minutes the frivolous Mrs. Corlier sat staring at vacancy with troubled eyes.

Her cogitation was interrupted by Corlier's return.

"I got Tom, and he says Tracy had most important engagements—business, you know, and he hasn't shown up at all. He's telephoned and telegraphed everywhere, but can't reach him. Seems awfully anxious. Capital on from San Francisco about taking up the Bushoff mines. I don't understand it. Tracy has been working on that proposition for six months—he wouldn't forget it."

Kitty rose lazily, but with subdued disgust.

"He's doubtless somewhere recuperating. I understand he is not averse to the wine 'when it is red' or any other color."

Corlier shook his head. "Not in business hours. I tell you, Kit, you're prejudiced—there isn't a really better chap than Goreing anywhere."

"Boodle, will you please see who that is at the door?"

He opened to the knock.

"Well, what is it, William?"

"Mrs. Lassar's man is below, brought this note and wants an answer."

Kitty ripped the envelope and read:

"MY DEAR MRS. CORLIER: It is Franchesca's duty to return to her home. In sheltering and aiding her in her insubordination and disobedience, you are by no means showing your friendship for my daughter. Kindly send her to me at once. I have waited two days, thinking she would come to her senses. But it seems I must exercise my authority.

"Very sincerely,
"ELEANOR LASSAR."

Kitty gasped.

"Why—what?" She turned harshly to the man. "Did the man who brought this ask for Miss Cross?"

"Yes'm. I said she hadn't been here."

"Go down and say that you don't know. Mr. Corlier says Mrs. Corlier is out of town, and Miss Cross is with her—do you understand?"

"My dear—" Corlier began.

A pinch from the wife of his bosom cut short his speech.

"Yes, ma'am," answered the butler, stolidly, checking the gasp of surprise that had almost escaped him.

Kitty shut the door sharply and stood facing her husband.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed under her breath. "I knew there was something up! We've got to save Franchesca if it's a possible thing—but, two days!—she's run away!—and two days!"

"Now what sort of a fool conclusion are you jumping at?" Corlier asked, hopelessly.

"I don't know," she confessed. "But sending over here at this time of the morning, they think she is here! We must hold the Lassars back at any cost. She's missing—suppose they send word to the police and have a search? There'd be no end to the scandal! Where is Vinette? Send her here, and you call up Van Wyn at once—tell him to come. I'm going to pack a few things and go over to the Holland House. I can be of some use there, but here—they'd be sure to find out I was

in town and Franchesca wasn't with me—quick!—quick!"

She dragged at the fastenings of her deshabille till she tore its fragile laces.

"Go on—telephone, can't you? I want Courtlandt!" She stamped her foot vehemently, and, as if suddenly galvanized, he flew to execute her orders. "Here," she exclaimed, as her maid hurried in, "my blue cloth tailor suit—the hat that goes with it. Pack my traveling case and the big gladstone—take what you need, too, for a few days. When Mr. Corlier gets through with the telephone, tell William to call up the stable, and have them send the coupé at once."

Never had the vain and dainty Kitty dressed with such feverish haste. In the midst of hookings and buttonings Anthony reappeared.

"Did you get him?" she demanded, as she piled with hurried fingers the necessities of her dressing table in a heap ready to be packed.

"He'll be here at once—said he had just received a note from Mrs. L., asking him to come there. He was just starting."

"You told him to come here first, I hope!"

Corlier nodded.

"This is all a mare's nest, Kitty; you're as crazy as a—chauffeur," he volunteered hopefully.

With a quick nod she indicated the bedroom door and the maid busy with hand bags. After a last jerk at her skirt she snatched her pocketbook and gloves from the dresser, and, seizing her husband's arm, conducted him out of the room and down the stairs to the drawing-room.

"I hope, I devoutly hope, it's only a mare's nest!" she began excitedly, "but—it's two and two and two and two, and it makes six, and I'm afraid. There's been trouble at the Lassars'—that magazine came out a few days ago. Franchesca is miserable, unhappy, reckless. She's been provoked to the uttermost. She may have sent for Goreing. They may be married now—anyway, we must hold the fort till she's found, and shield her, if she needs shielding. I'll swear

she was with me—and you must, too—if it's necessary. Oh, why doesn't Courtlandt come! He's an old fossil, but he's devoted to Fran, and he pulls a strong oar with Aunt Eleanor! You, Boodle, call up—no, I will—she might be at the Wainwrights or the Carpenters."

Ten minutes at the telephone brought no information.

"I couldn't ask outright, you know," she said, returning to the drawing-room; "but when I intimated that she was with me, I could see that she wasn't with them—oh, dear!"

A moment later Van Wyn arrived. He was drawn, and pale, yet the instinct of protection had awakened in him the sleeping energies of his intuitive, vigorous brain.

Kitty flew at him like a young panther.

"What do you know about Franchesca?" she demanded, her eyes on his in anxious questioning.

"She's not with you?" Courtlandt's face turned gray, his lips closed convulsively.

"No!"

There was a moment's silence.

"And Tracy Goreing has disappeared!" blurted Corlier.

Van Wyn staggered.

Kitty cast a glance of angry impatience at her husband.

"Boodle, go at once to my room, and hurry Vinette—go!"

Boodle obeyed.

"And now," she continued, turning to her ally, "what happened at the Lassars to bring this about? All I know is that Eleanor sent over this morning, assuming that Franchesca was here, and demanded her return. William said she hadn't been here, but I sent over word in Boodle's name, that I was out of town, and Franchesca with me. That will hold things back for a little. Now we must find her."

Van Wyn collapsed weakly into the nearest chair.

"Eleanor and Lassar have made that child's life a hell!"

"Yes, I know," exclaimed Kitty, impatiently.

"I didn't know you cared or observed enough—I beg your pardon," he answered with frank courtesy. "About three months ago Eleanor broke into Franchesca's desk and read all her private papers."

Kitty flushed with indignation.

"Among other things, her poems. Eleanor made a scene. I tried to protect the child and make her mother hear reason—but, the last straw was added. Fran hasn't been the same since."

"Now I understand," broke in Kitty, suddenly enlightened.

"I wanted to encourage her," Courtlandt went on. "I found when I went home that day that a little thing—some quatrains—had some way remained in my possession, after Eleanor had shown the poems to me. I thought to help and vindicate Fran by giving them a chance to be published. I fancied, like a fool, that Eleanor would admire if other people did—that she simply didn't understand her daughter's worth."

"Yes," said Kitty. "'Aphrodite's Tears', I saw it. That made the final scene—recriminations, tears, insults, sarcasms!"

"I suppose so."

"Then, of course, Fran went up, packed her bag, and fled."

"Undoubtedly."

"But where?—where?"

"If she's in love with Goreing, she went to him; if she isn't, she went where she could be alone."

"Oh," wailed Kitty, "if she had only come to me!"

"I think," he answered gravely, "she misjudged you—as I have. But why didn't she come to me?"

"She's not with any of the girls; I've telephoned. Have you heard exactly when she was missed?"

He shook his head.

"No, a note came from Eleanor, asking me to come at once, Franchesca had run away—she was with—she always flew to you in her temper. Her bed had not been slept in—her necessities had been removed."

Kitty darted to the window and glanced out.

"The coupé is there. Mr. Van Wyn,

let them think she's in the country with me. I'll be at the Holland House. Come to me there as soon as you've seen the Lassars. We'll know better what is likely to have happened, and what to do. We haven't a minute to lose. I'll see that Boodle coaches the servants. Go on at once!"

Courtlandt arose, hesitated a moment and advanced.

"At the risk of losing a precious moment, I want to tell you, Kitty, I'm infinitely indebted—you're a credit to —"

"Oh, do, do hurry!" begged Mrs. Corlier.

With a few quick orders and a last peck at her mystified husband's cheek, Kitty, followed by her maid, descended to the street. Courtlandt, entering his hansom, watched Kitty's smart little carriage as it turned the corner sharply and disappeared from his view. Then, settling back, he endeavored to compose his forces for the coming interview. A few moments more and he stepped out before the brownstone, massive ugliness of the Lassar mansion.

He was conducted at once to the presence of the invalid. The shades were drawn, the air heavy with the odor of smelling salts. Upon the lounge, in a Doucé creation, of the kind in which stage heroines elect to die, Mrs. Lassar lay prone.

"I am here," said Courtlandt, quietly.

The lady arose to a sitting posture, pushed back the blonde tresses from her brow, and exclaimed:

"It has come!"

"What?" said Courtlandt, out of patience with theatricals.

"The blow has fallen! She has left this roof!"

"Then you shouldn't have put her on the roof," he answered, with irritation, determined to break down the heroics at any cost, filled, as he was, by a deeper anxiety.

"Yes, yes! jeer at me!"

"Do you know where she is?" he asked, anxiously, fearing lest she had divined or learned the truth.

Mrs. Lassar turned her blue eyes to the ceiling.

"Kitty is aiding and abetting her folly and disobedience. They have gone—where I do not know, and Anthony Corlier neglected to mention. Ah! I have recalled what you said to me of Kitty. You were right. I should never have encouraged the companionship."

"Kitty is an excellent woman," exclaimed Courtlandt, hastily.

"No doubt, since she sided against me, in your eyes she has reformed," she said, with bitter scorn.

"Tell me what happened," he asked, hungry for any clue that might disclose Franchesca's whereabouts.

"I called her to account for the appearance of an indecent, erotic set of verses. I had ordered her to destroy that shameless stuff. She disobeyed me, bringing disgrace upon us, and then lied, lied to me, to her stepfather—oh! why should I be so afflicted? What have I done that shame should be heaped upon me? Is there no sense of right in the world, no respect, no duty?"

Courtlandt waited till the storm abated.

"You made a scene, I see, in spite of all that I said to you. Now, let me inquire, in what, you say Franchesca lied and disobeyed?"

Mrs. Lassar sat stonily.

"By allowing that—that—those verses to be published—and then, here, in my face, denying that she had done so. She had the audacity to declare that she didn't know how it happened; that she thought she had destroyed everything that afternoon, when she burned the papers rather than have Mr. Lassar read her disgraceful writings—"

"Which is quite true," Van Wyn interrupted. "I sent those verses. She never knew. I did it to encourage her, and to convince you that you were altogether wrong in your estimate."

A whirlwind of reproach descended upon Van Wyn's devoted head. He was vaguely conscious of a torrent of stinging words and ceaseless lashing of accusations, interspersed with wails to Divine Justice, and self-commiseration, that ended finally in tears and sobs.

For once his sympathetic heart refused to be moved. Instead, his soul

hardened against this woman. With Franchesca in mind, he followed the unchecked, illogical ravings, suffering in understanding the irritation and torment the girl must have daily and hourly endured. What a life! No wonder she had rebelled and fled. But where?—where? He scarcely heeded the vitriolic outpourings of Mrs. Lassar's bitterness, and it was with a stern coldness, new from him to her, that he broke in upon her wrath.

"So, then, you drove her away with your cruelty, your tempers, your inconsequent rages—"

Mrs. Lassar stopped short, aghast, breathless.

"I! I!"—she stammered, "I, who have slaved, sacrificed, have had no thought but my duty to my child! This—this, to me!"

He nodded.

"I might as well be frank; though, no matter what I tell you, you go on your own way—refusing to see when you are to blame. The thing now is, not your complaints, but how to save Franchesca from any false step, you, in your self-righteous barbarism may have driven her to contemplate. How do you know she is with Kitty?"

The question came with such sharp command that Mrs. Lassar was suddenly awed into quiet.

"When I sent her to her room the night before last she must have packed her bag and slipped out. The maid found out yesterday morning her bed had not been slept in. Her toilet articles were gone."

"She left no word?"

"Yes—she pinned on the bureau an old visiting card of Kitty's."

"Did she have money?"

"About twenty dollars, I think. I waited for a day, then I sent at once to the Corliers."

"What answer?"

"Anthony sent word Kitty had left town, and Franchesca was with her—didn't even deign to tell me where. Evidently they are anxious to help that girl in the downward path she has chosen for herself."

"Suppose she will not come back?"

Mrs. Lassar laughed a hard, vindictive chuckle.

"She has no money. You forget how wisely Edgerley left all his money to me outright. You don't suppose the Corliers will want to assume the entire responsibility—besides, a girl's place is by her mother's side. What would be said of Franchesca if it were known that she could not behave herself decently enough to remain with her own family? Franchesca will come to her senses and beg forgiveness."

"Not if I don't die before morning," murmured Van Wyn, under his breath. "Then you will take no steps for her return?" he asked, aloud.

"None for the present. If she does not come of her own accord, I will apply through the courts. To think—to think—my name in the courts!"

"Franchesca has reached the age of discretion," observed Van Wyn.

"Franchesca is too proud to live at the expense of her friends. She will come back here," said her mother.

"She may marry somebody, marry to gain her freedom—may make some fatal mistake, pledge all her future life to gain a hoped-for independence and peace—and, Eleanor, it is your fault!"

"Is Kitty planning to marry her off to somebody?" Mrs. Lassar demanded, this new idea just beginning to take effect on her short-sighted mind.

"If Franchesca will come back, may I promise her that you will say nothing, and she shall not be molested?" he answered, ignoring her question.

"I shall do my duty."

For once in his life Courtlandt Van Wyn was unmannerly. He arose, and without a word of farewell, left the room.

CHAPTER V.

Three days followed in which the Corliers and Van Wyn exhausted every method of search at their disposal without result.

Meanwhile the unaccountable disappearance of Goreing had become public property. The papers rang with it, and, in spite of Kitty's enforced imprison-

ment and the tireless Boodle's constant effort to circulate the report of Franchesca's stay with Kitty in the country, gossip linked the sudden flight of Franchesca with the missing Goreing. That Kitty should be in some mysterious way mixed in the affair seemed not at all surprising—one expected anything of Kitty.

Meanwhile the invalid wept and wailed, calling upon heaven and earth to witness her great enduring qualities, and the heartless madness of her daughter.

These were days of torment unmeasurable to Van Wyn. He strove to accomplish omnipresence. All his affections were centered in the child he had seen grow in grace and beauty from the days of baby clothes to her débutante gowns—grown, too, in heart and intellect, like that dead father whose handsome, genial face was enshrined forever in loyal memory.

And Franchesca was nowhere to be found.

On the evening of the fourth day Van Wyn, heart-broken and defeated, turned wearily homeward. As he entered the vast, old-fashioned hall of his house, his eye fell upon the silver card tray on the marble-topped console table.

The familiar boyish writing shone at him from an envelope of cheap paper.

Weakness fell upon him. He had hardly strength left to grasp the letter and stagger into the drawing-room. All the weariness and misery of that fruitless search took hold on him now that enlightenment was at hand. He recovered sufficiently to rise, his hands upon the arms of the chair in which he had found refuge. A touch, and the room was filled with the soft radiance of hidden electric lights, bringing into view the countless treasures of the place. He saw only the cheap envelope postmarked Boston in his hand. Feverishly he opened it.

"Dear Partner," he read. "I had to run away. I couldn't stand it any longer. Don't scold me, please, when you hear what I've done; but it couldn't go on. I had to find some way of making my own living."

"I've gone on the stage—there, it's out!

I'm a chorus girl in the new piece, 'The Magic Wand'—at '18 per,' as they say. But I learn so much quicker than the rest of them, and pick up the music so readily that I'm pretty sure of getting on.

"You may do what you think best about telling mamma—I can't go back after the things she said to me—and, honestly, I can't imagine how those verses found their way into print. You'll believe me, I know, but she wouldn't—and—tell Kitty I pinned her card on the bureau, hoping mother would think I had gone there and so I'd gain a little start.

"I suppose I've cut myself off from everybody by this; but nobody need know what I'm doing. I don't think people would recognize me in the costumes and wigs—I insist on wearing a wig, though they all seem to think I'm crazy. I've taken a stage name, too—Margaret Allen—and I'm staying at a funny little theatrical boarding house that really isn't half bad. One of the girls took me there—she's a common little soul, but really white. Now please, please, don't be angry. We're frightfully busy with rehearsals, as we—what little Letty Johnson ('Johnnie' is her nickname), calls 'open up' next week.

"There's something else, and I'm afraid you'll be awfully shocked—I shall have to wear tights! Oh, with high boots, you know, and a skirty sort of jerkin.

"Really and truly, Partner, I don't know how you'll understand this, but I couldn't be dependent after all that was said—and, how could I make money? I'm nice looking, and I've a good voice—but that's all.

"I couldn't go and live on my friends, could I? Mr. Goreing had spoken about this manager as being a friend of his, so I came straight here and told the manager Mr. Goreing had told me to. That wasn't true, but you see the rehearsals had already been going on for some time, and I had to have pull to get in at all. I hope he won't be too cross.

"Come to see me, but don't let any one else know.

"Your devoted and, I suppose, very reprehensible
PARTNER."

Van Wyn gasped. A vision of Franchesca in tights, smiling through rouge and powder across the glare of foot-lights, left him horrified. Any other girl than Franchesca! Even Kitty in spangled hose seemed quite a matter of course. But Franchesca! The thought was unendurable.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "Good heavens! Gave Goreing's name, too. Anyway, that settles it—he isn't with her. Then where on earth is he? That's the least of troubles, though. The point is, that child is alone."

He read the letter again. This time, the picture that presented itself was Franchesca in a theatrical boarding house, her companions, her fellow chorus girls and figurantes. He sprang to his feet with a shudder, and rang the bell.

"Pack my suit case, Charles," he ordered, sharply. "I take the midnight train for Boston. Meet me there with my traps, and stop the first hansom that passes."

"You're not going out without dinner, Mr. Van Wyn?" inquired the mystified butler, upon whom his master's strange irregularities of the past week had made a deep impression.

"I shall dine out—call that hansom, can't you?"

"Shan't I telephone for the carriage, sir?"

"Must I get a hack for myself?" Van Wyn demanded, sternly.

The man flew to the door and was half down the steps in an instant, gazing into the fog-dimmed night. A pair of yellow lamps shone mellow in the haze as a cab turned the corner.

"Hansom here, sir," Van Wyn heard as in a dream.

"At the Grand Central. Charles. Don't forget—midnight train. Tell him to the Holland House."

The drive to the hotel seemed ages long, until, with the letter clutched in his hand, he was shown to Mrs. Corlier's sitting-room and found that lady patiently teaching Boul Miche "to play dead."

She jumped up excitedly, nearly trampling on her prostrate pet.

"News?" she demanded.

He nodded, handing her the note.

"At last!" she exclaimed, as she recognized the writing. "May I?" she asked, half withdrawing the enclosure.

Again he nodded.

Her practiced eye devoured the boyish scrawl. Her piquant face underwent change after change—surprise, indignation, approval, and at last a settled look of stupefaction. She glanced at Van Wyn.

"I don't know whether I am more relieved than horrified. I don't care!"

she went on suddenly. "She's a dear, sweet, plucky soul! Think of her starting out all by herself like that! Do you know, it is criminal, that's what it is, to make anybody's home a misery. I'd rather marry a burglar than a scold. The longer I live the greater store I set on amiability. Honesty, morality—everything pales before it. That makes me think of Boodle; I adore Boodle, dear, sweet, lovable ass that he is. I must notify him I'm going to Boston, perhaps he'll come, too. He's the happiest of men since Fran separated us. He's having a wonderful clandestine affair with me. Sneaks in, avoiding observation, brings me all sorts of things to solace my seclusion. Just look at these flowers, will you. The waiter thinks I must be awfully immoral—And I'll take the midnight train."

Kitty's spirits were mounting with every word. Already she had sorted papers, closed her writing case, made a neat package of various small articles, and was in the act of powdering her tip-tilted nose with a microscopic puff. She enlivened the scarlet of her lips with the aid of an anointed finger tip, moistened her eyebrows to remove any grains of powder, and smiled bewitchingly. Kitty had a most fascinating way of openly adorning herself—on a club veranda, in a ballroom, in her coupé—one never knew when not to expect a sortie of cosmetics—all this with an absent-minded naïvete that would have melted a Galahad.

"We will bring her home with us, of course," she prattled on, "and she can stay with me till Eleanor backs off her high horse—hope she gets a bump when she does it. All the same, Courlandt, you displayed an amazing want of tact when you sent in those verses. I could have foretold this if you'd asked me. I don't see how you came to make such a mistake."

"I must be growing old," he admitted, ruefully.

His tone attracted her attention. She glanced at him quickly.

"Are you ill?" she questioned. "Have you had dinner?—no? You dine here with Boodle and me, then. You really

must take care of yourself. You're worn out by all this. Now, take every bit of that, every bit—you need it."

From somewhere she produced a little gold flask, which she held out to him.

"I don't indulge as a general rule," he answered, smiling, "but this time I believe you to be a good physician—I am a queer kind of new tired. Whatever you do, Kitty, don't grow old."

"Never shall," she answered, promptly. "Where do you suppose Goreing is?"

"I'm sure I don't care. Let's plan about Franchesca."

CHAPTER VI.

In a very small and dingy hall bedroom in a house one degree smaller and more dingy, sat Franchesca.

The tiny alarm clock on the hideous walnut bureau was striking nine with mosquito persistence; fog and an odor of breakfast sifted through the narrow window. Franchesca was by no means troubled by her sordid surroundings. Though her eyes were weary and anxious, her mouth twitched with suppressed laughter.

On the bed, her back resting against the headboard, her knees drawn up to her chin, sat a small person in a light blue silk negligée and curl papers. The small person was holding forth.

"No, you did that outter sight. Say, don't you let 'em knock the originality outter you. Take my word. How do you suppose I ever come to the front? I saw my way to do a thing, and I did it, you bet! The principals were dead sore—chased around and complained to the manager, and he made it hot for me. All the same I saw I was making good, and I kept right on. What happened? Got a raise and a pass-sool. Look at me now—no grand march for yours truly; pass-sools every time, or no Johnnie. You just do as the rest do up to a certain point, then you do as you—please. Oh, say, beg pardon. I hate swearing, but you do hear such awful talk around the theatre. Gee! there's

a hole in those silk stockings of yours. Gimme a needle and I'll mend it for you. Now, you've made a hit with old Bulkley, I can see that, and if the Tillinghast doesn't last through the next rehearsal (which I don't think she will) he'll try you. Do any steps?"

Franchesca shook her head.

"Just ordinary dancing, but I could learn."

"Oh, if you do the ordinary it's all right. Just a couple of toe rocks and a slip kick will do; it's just to lead up to my entrance, and I'll help you out."

"But I don't know a toe rock from a granite rock," said Franchesca. "I meant two-steps and waltzes and such things."

"Well, that's bad. Never mind, I'll learn you. Sa-ay, don't you hate that big Murphy girl? Now, I like your style. You're graceful, and you put your feet down with the toes out."

The quick fingers of the small person traveled swiftly over Franchesca's clothing, deftly mending and smoothing.

"There, now," she said, "we're called at ten-thirty, aren't we? Guess I better go to my room and be thinking about getting up. Say, do the roots of my hair show dark—no? don't need to touch 'em up, then. That's the nuisance of peroxide. But can't wear wigs with a contortion dance, you know, and I don't like myself in my own hair. Yours is a dandy color. I can't see what you want a wig for, I'm surprised they let you have it. I'm going to get breakfast on my gas stove—I'll tell you when it's ready. It's lots nicer than that rat's nest of a dining-room. If I didn't owe such a lot just now I'd never live here, I can tell you. There's the dandiest place—Gee! I'd talk all day, I would. I'll knock on the wall when it's ready—bye—"

The small person bounced to the door, lost a slipper, giggled, caught the offending footgear with a dexterous toe, and disappeared.

Franchesca laughed outright. Her singular neighbor was a source of intense amusement. The novelty of this bohemian life, comfortless though it was, had not as yet worn off, and the

new world in which she found herself provided such food for thought and speculation that annoyances slipped by with wonderful ease. She washed and dressed herself as fastidiously as her narrow quarters would permit, coiled her hair and looked at herself critically in the glass. She was learning to see herself from a new and purely commercial standpoint.

"I ought to look well enough from the front," she observed, smiling at the use of the theatrical term. She glanced down the reflected lines of her figure and blushed, vividly imagining the scarlet tights and ooze boots. With a little gasp and a determined line about her mouth, she turned from the mirror.

"Come on," said Johnnie, in the adjoining room, emphasizing her command by a volley of knocks.

The dancer's suite—for it boasted a sitting-room—was a maze of photographs interlarded with bouquet ribbons, menu cards from popular cafes, and assorted souvenirs. A stuffed stocking, garter and frills complete, hung from the bureau and served as a pincushion. The bureau itself groaned under the weight of an assortment of cosmetics, perfume bottles, puffs, hares' feet, lotions and manicure articles.

The hostess presided over a small gas stove insteadily placed on a trunk top. The aroma of excellent coffee showed her household arts to be the equal of her more public performances.

"Here's coffee and rolls and eggs—was the cream bottle at the door? All right—Say, do you like toilet water? I've got a new kind—bully—I'll give you some. Isn't that good cream?"

There was a pause. The small person hesitated.

"Do you believe in cards?" she asked, at last; "fortunes?—that sort of thing? I do. I wish you'd let me read yours—will you? All right."

She tossed a little pack of very ornate playing cards on the tumbled bed and went on with her coffee excitedly.

"I can't wait—you cut 'em, and wish—wish hard, and make three piles. Oh, say—your're going to get married—here's a man following you—and he's

an old gentleman, and he's awful fond of you—and another man, who's awfully mad about it—he thinks you're just fine."

Somewhere in the dingy street a hand organ began to wail:

"Oh, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?"

Tears gathered in Franchesca's eyes. There flashed across her mind a memory of summer afternoons on the cool verandas of her mother's country house, when, contrary to Mrs. Lassar's express commands, Van Wyn had read aloud to her the wonderfully human story of Trilby.

"And of all the friends who were school-mates then,
There remains but you and I——"

"Poor old partner!" she murmured, "and I waited so long before I wrote to him!——"

"My!" said the small person, "here's a shock and all sorts of things happening at once, and some rows and fusses! Don't you care—you're all right; only your wish card doesn't come as you think it will—— Oh, goodness! it's ten o'clock!—come on."

A moment later they were in the street, hurrying through the raw fog. An ugly stage entrance engulfed them. With a nod to the doorkeeper, Johnnie inspected the letter rack with a practiced eye, and darted down the dim corridor. A crowd of young women swarmed everywhere with unexpected silence and order. A man at a piano idly touched a few chords and talked with a tall girl in a gymnasium suit. Two or three men chatting together at the stage left, looked up impatiently.

The rehearsal went off with its usual drag and repetition. At last the final chorus was sung, the last tableau grouped satisfactorily. "That will be all, young ladies. To-morrow at nine-thirty, please."

Franchesca turned with the rest toward the dressing-rooms, when some one touched her arm, and the manager drew her aside quietly.

"Did you know Mr. Goreing was here and in the hospital?" he asked, abruptly.

"No!" gasped Franchesca. "What's the matter?"

"Will you go to my office, Miss Allen, and wait there? I'll join you presently."

In a daze Franchesca found her wraps, quite oblivious of the chatter around her. Threading her way through the narrow passages, she took her seat in the office by the big desk, and waited anxiously. Why on earth should Goreing be in Boston, and in the hospital? What could it all mean?

Presently the manager entered busily, dashed a few memoranda on his pad, and turned to her.

"You mentioned Mr. Goreing's name in coming to me," he began, not unkindly.

Franchesca nodded.

"So I took the liberty of making a few inquiries; whereat Mr. Goreing telegraphed he would be on here at once. He didn't arrive, but I learned he had started for Boston. You can imagine I was puzzled. Well, I engaged you anyhow, as you know, on my own judgment. The New York papers commented on his disappearance. Two days ago I learned from an outside source that there had been some sort of a scrap here at the stage door. From the account I gathered that some one of those confounded Johnnies who hang about, started to follow you up the street, announcing his intention of speaking to you, whereupon a man intercepted him. There was a row. The man who had interfered was tripped, and fell against the curb, the other fellow took to his heels. Goreing, for it was he, got up dizzily and went away. It seems he was arrested later on, and jugged on a charge of alcoholism, nothing on him, as it happened, to identify him except his tailor's name in New York. It didn't dawn on the fool police that he was badly hurt till they found he didn't get over his jag. Then he was fired out to the hospital, where they paid mighty little attention to him."

Franchesca sat silent. Keat eyed her narrowly. He had his own opinion of

the situation, yet her manner puzzled him.

"His family has been notified, and his brother is here. They telephoned me from the hospital this morning."

"I'm glad," said Franchesca, dully.

"Of course, Miss Allen, I don't pretend to advise you."

"Do not call me Miss Allen," she burst out, impulsively. "It seems a part of this whole dreadful thing. It makes me feel underhand, somehow, as if I were in the wrong. My name's not Allen."

"Of course," he said, with a matter-of-fact nod.

"Is he going to die?" she demanded, abruptly.

Keat shrugged expressively.

She paled. "And on my account—I—I can't take it in—I must have been so near—right there when it happened—and I never knew, never guessed. Isn't life strange!"

"The most unaccountable thing in the world," Keat sat silent, watching the mobile face before him with interest. She was thinking hard, quite unaware of her surroundings, unconscious of his presence. She hardly behaved as he had expected. Suddenly he cast aside all his preconceived notions. "Of good family—row at home—flew off—used Goreing's name in all innocence—that's what it is," he announced to himself. "Poor child! She's a lot to learn. Hope she doesn't leave the stage, though. She's dramatic all through. What a face!"

Franchesca came back to herself with a start.

"I beg your pardon. I can't get over this. I feel responsible—I—I didn't have any right to use Mr. Goreing's name when I came to you. He didn't send me—he didn't know I was coming. I had heard him mention you as being a college mate—you—understand—"

He nodded. So his last guess had hit the mark.

"It's terribly unfortunate, of course, but I don't see that you are to blame. You couldn't possibly have known this would happen, Miss Allen."

"My name is Franchesca Cross. You've been so kind I—I—"

"It's quite usual to take a stage name, Miss Cross," he said, gravely.

Again she faced him.

"I've let my guardian know all about what I've done. I can send for him if you think best."

"I would, Miss Cross."

There was silence.

"I'll telephone your telegram from here, if you will write what you wish on this slip."

She wrote her message and handed it to him simply.

He caught the address and started. Van Wyn's name was international property—surely this was a chorus girl of no small importance. Well, stranger things had happened. He turned to her again.

"Don't you think you had better change your mind about the hospital?" he ventured.

But Franchesca was too inexperienced to understand his drift.

"Of course, I'm going," she said, firmly. "Didn't he get hurt defending me?" Her anxious and self-accusing eyes stared blindly at the old carpet.

"Ah," he thought, "what capacity for pain in that generous mouth, what a realm of cynicism to conquer in those deep eyes!" he sighed.

"I must be going," she said, hastily, rising. "Thank you for telling me. Where did they take him?"

He wrote the name for her on a slip of paper, adding the telephone number.

"You can call up any time, you know," he said, "and I shall go myself this afternoon. I'll keep you informed. Good-by." He showed her to the door, bowed and left her.

As in a dream she made her way to the street.

"Poor Goreing! dying perhaps, because of me!" She hurried on blindly, at first without purpose, then with sudden conviction. Of course, she must go at once and inquire. She called a cab, forgetful of her straightened circumstances, gave her directions, and jumped in.

Stone steps, white tiles, a vague odor

of carbolic acid. To the end of her days a white tile would spell "hospital" to Franchesca. A blur of shining whiteness, out of which people came and told dreadful things in indifferent voices.

"Yes, Mr. Goreing was not expected to live. His brother was with him—no one else could be admitted. They would probably trepan. No, he was unconscious, in a stupor, or raving. Yes, there was always a chance."

Franchesca questioned with a methodical precision quite unlike her usual manner. "Would she leave her card?" She blushed suddenly crimson, and hesitated.

"I haven't one with me," she murmured, rising, "but I'll call again. Mr. Keat will notify me if anything happens."

The doctor looked at her curiously.

"There has been a great deal of newspaper interest excited," he went on. "Reporters hanging around all the time. They'll be after you when you go out. There was one sitting in the office who probably overheard you ask for Mr. Goreing. Good-by."

Still in a dream Franchesca passed once more through the gleaming halls and down the stone steps. A man with a camera stepped toward her. Instinctively she covered her face and fled. At the foot of the stairs she was politely stopped by a young man in knickerbockers.

"Excuse me, you asked just now for Mr. Goreing. Can you tell me what led to the fight in Tremont Street, where Mr. Goreing was hurt? doubtless the doorkeeper—"

Again she blushed furiously and slammed the cab door. "Drive on," she ordered from the opposite window, "I'll tell you where later." They rattled off. Farther down the street she gave the directions, and with a gasp almost of relief, recognized the familiar, dingy street. She wanted quiet in which to think out this new sensation of responsibility.

Her tiny room with its gray light and unredeemed ugliness seemed a refuge against further untoward happenings.

As she mounted the steps the door flew open, framing a vision of Johnnie, her mocking face ablaze with excitement, her peroxide hair well pulled down over a sparkling left eye.

"I've been entertaining a gentleman for you here for hours and hours," she announced. "I told him you'd gone to lunch with the manager, and goodness only knew when you'd be home. But he said he'd wait anyhow."

At any other time Franchesca would have laughed in spite of herself, now she was too full of anxiety.

"Thank you," she said, and, pushing by her disappointed Boswell, she flew to the dilapidated parlor.

Very erect in his chair sat Van Wyn. He arose hastily as Franchesca, with a gulp, folded him in her strong young embrace.

"Oh, I'm so glad, so glad—glad!" she repeated, panting and tearless. "There have been such—things!" She backed away from him at arm's length. "It's so good to see you," she said. Then she took in his sunken eyes, his ashen pallor, the drawn lines of suffering about his firm mouth. "You're ill, Partner— Oh, I know, you needn't tell me; it's anxiety about me. It's my fault. Mamma was right. I am cruel—I'm bringing misfortune on every one—"

"Hush, hush, hush!" he murmured. "I understand—never fear. Don't bother about me. Kitty is here at the Touraine waiting for you. Don't worry—don't fret—everything will come right. You shall stay with her. You needn't go back home."

Franchesca drew away.

"Oh, no; I'm not going back, Partner." Then, coaxing and gentle. "You see I can't. I must make my living, and I've started. I shall go on, indeed I shall; and I must be independent, truly I must. Don't you see, I can put up with all sorts of inconveniences—it doesn't matter when you're busy." Then she paused. "Then you didn't get the telegram I sent?"

He shook his head.

"No, I've been trying to find you all day. Unfortunately, I wasn't well this morning—a sort of dizziness from the

night travel—otherwise, I would have been out in time to find you—what was it, dear?"

With her hand in his, oblivious of the interested eyes of passing boarders, she poured out all the story.

Van Wyn sat aghast and silent.

Meanwhile, in her rooms at the Touraine, sat Kitty, her solitude unconsolated even by her beloved Boul Miche. She paced the floor nervously.

"I do wish he had let me go, too. I don't see why not. Suppose he has fallen ill, or something—he looked so badly this morning. I wish Boodle or Boul Miche or somebody were here. I feel positively frightened. I'm sure I don't see why people can't live along quietly without such troublesome things happening." She paused before the glass over the mantel. "I might have known it; there are three wrinkles in my forehead, and a great gash by my mouth. They say, 'cultivate repose,' but I cannot. Hateful Boodle! never has business cares unless I want him for something—then he can't come. That isn't fair, either, he really couldn't this time. If something doesn't happen pretty soon, I shall go mad—or after Franchesca myself. If I only had my own angel puppy dog—he at least has no troubles, except to catch sugar, and he listens to everything I have to say. I'll never have troubles without him again—never! I've waited so much lately that I'm fairly done. My! won't I take it out of Boodle—poor man! We'll accept every invitation—dinners, dances, theatre suppers. It must be awful to be marooned on a desert island!"

Kitty comforted herself with powder and *vinagre-de-rouge*, and paused in her nervous pacing of the floral carpet border.

"Ye gods! how many hours to the day—365 at least—and what are we to do with Franchesca? She simply can't go back; and if she stays with me and refuses to return home, there'll be all manner of talk, particularly from Eleanor, who, with the best of intentions, will blacken her daughter all she can. Oh, what fools women are! and what

idiots men are! and only dogs are wise! Why on earth didn't Van Wyn see what would come of his sending those verses. He knew Eleanor—he the 'greatest mind in Wall Street'—he 'the Combiner of Railroads'—'the far-seeing genius of wheat and oats and cotton' and things! The more I see of these great men the more I fancy I could beat them all at their own games, instead of being a mere tea-table Napoleon. Oh, shades of Tantalus, why doesn't something happen!"

Voices in the corridor. A knock. A moment later Kitty's powdered cheek rested against Franchesca's burning face—black curls and brown mingled in what appeared a lasting embrace.

"Oh, my dear, my dear! what a time, what a time you've given us! Franchesca, you have slaughtered us all! Sit down—sit down—where's your bag, Fran? Courtlandt, take a rest; you're positively green." She paused for breath.

Van Wyn shook his head.

"I'm going to my room a moment, Kitty. I feel a little thumpy, and I'll take some medicine. Fran will tell you all about herself; then we must hold a council of war." He smiled wanly as he closed the door.

Franchesca started.

"He's so ill—it's all my fault," she cried.

Kitty caught her in a warm caress.

"He'll get over it now we have you," she comforted. "Now, tell me everything."

Franchesca began. Kitty heard her through in silence.

"Partner says I made a fatal mistake in going to the hospital; that all sorts of stories will get about. But, can't you see, Kitty, I *had* to go?" Franchesca finished her story, pleadingly.

Kitty whistled and ran her slim fingers through her dark hair.

"Oh, Fran, Fran! If you only were about half as warm hearted, and honest, and talented and foolish! what peace and quiet! I don't know just what is best to do, except that you can't stay here."

"But I must——"

"But you can't! don't you see. Just stop and think. The outside world can't know how you are tormented at home. The wrong is always with the girl when there's a disagreement between mother and daughter. One can't malign one's mother, of course. What are you to say? My angel child, if you do go home, you never in the world could stay. If you come to Europe with me on a visit, then every one will say I'm getting you out of the way to avoid scandal. Of course, Goring has been in the hospital from the moment he was reported absent. If you go back to your work these reporter people will spot you, and it won't be long before Miss Allen will be found to be Miss Cross—there you are. My dear, you can't go back to your boarding house. Don't you see?"

Francesca awoke from her dream of independence.

"I see," she said, sadly. "I suppose it's all so. But my absence—how account for that?"

"My dear," and Kitty dabbed her nose excitedly with her puff, "my dear, you have been with me all the time. You see before you, Fran, a martyr on friendship's altar! I have been hermetically sealed in a suite at the Holland House, while Boodle has judiciously sown broadcast the information that you and I were in the country together. We may have to prove it, but I fancy my ex-nurse who has married a little hotel man in Duchess County, can be readily made to swear to our presence there. But that won't be necessary, I hope. We may be able to carry out the bluff. My dear," she added, suddenly, "don't you know somebody you want to marry?"

Francesca laughed, and shook her head.

"No, not a soul. You wouldn't loan me Boodle, would you?"

Kitty's puckered brow relaxed.

"No, not even to you. Where in the world should I find anything so idiotic and adorable? My own Boodle is even dearer than Boul Miche, though no one could believe that possible."

Van Wyn knocked and entered.

Kitty turned to him gravely.

"I have just been wishing that Fran could find some one she wanted to marry. If we are able to carry through our bluff, she might endure home for a while—then fly to one of her own. It would cover the whole case."

"Only there isn't any one," said Francesca. She held out her hand to Van Wyn. "Find me some one as good and fine as you are," she said, softly, "and I will."

A flash of inspiration illumined his face.

"Why look further? Will you be partners, Fran? Not that I mean to burden you with any foolish attentions, my girl, but let me be the father whom we have both loved and lost. Let me take my partner into the firm just to teach her the world, and give her the protection she needs. It won't be long before the junior member will be free to form another and closer alliance. Fran—it's the best way for all of us. I shall have my little girl to watch and tend and love, and you can have the freedom and the stimulus that you need, and the protection that my name can give. Will you?"

Kitty jumped up excitedly.

"Of course she will. Oh, how splendid!—that's—that's—well, you are a trump!"

Tears arose to Francesca's eyes.

"You're always so good. I—I don't know— Partner, you decide for me."

CHAPTER VII.

Kitty giggled nervously.

"Don't be any longer about it than is positively necessary. We shall die, waiting out here in the carriage. Gracious! but I'm glad I'm not in your shoes!"

Francesca looked very white, but said nothing as Van Wyn slowly descended from the coupé and made his way with lagging step to the door of the Lassar mansion. The summons was promptly answered by the butler, who had evidently recognized the Corlier liveries, and, knowing how matters

stood, guessed that diplomatic negotiations were about to open.

"Mrs. Lassar was quite ill, but if Mr. Van Wyn would step into the drawing-room perhaps—" the butler bowed hopefully as he held back the portières.

Van Wyn restlessly paced the room, and a grim smile came to his lips as he recalled how frequently he had waited there in perturbation and unreasoning dread.

"Mrs. Lassar would see Mr. Van Wyn," the butler announced. With quaking heart the visitor followed to the sitting-room.

"I suppose," said the invalid, "you have come to plead the cause of my unnatural daughter." He inclined his head slowly. "It has pleased Heaven to afflict me in many things," she went on. "I am bereft of health, of the affections I should have most surely counted upon; surrounded by false friends who have lured my daughter away from my side. What am I to do! What am I to do!"

"I have come to offer my poor advice in this very matter," said Courtlandt, with forced cheerfulness.

"Is Miss Cross—she is no longer Franchesca to me—is she still with that intriguing, unscrupulous woman?"

"She is with Mrs. Corlier," he answered, stiffly.

"To think!—to think!— I have known that girl's mother—all her family! I have watched her grow from a child, and now she bands against me and abets my child in her unrighteous rebellion. Courtlandt, it is your duty to help me."

"I am very anxious to do so."

"Has that child come to her senses?" she demanded. "Has she realized how she has broken my heart, and disgraced herself?"

"Franchesca is anxious for your forgiveness," he said, slowly, containing his rising indignation with difficulty.

A smile of bitter triumph curled Mrs. Lassar's thin lips.

"So—now that she finds the opinion of the world against her—now that the Corlier woman is wearied of having her hanging on, she wants me to take her back." Mrs. Lassar arose from her

couch and tragically stalked toward the hearth. "The wages of disobedience!" she exclaimed. "She would not listen to me—her own mother—knowing I have only her good at heart, she flings herself out of the house in a rage! throwing in my face I know not what epithets! And now she sends you to me. But does she promise implicit obedience? Does she promise to drop this erratic poetry of hers? Does she come penitently?"

"No!" said Van Wyn, rising painfully. "No, Eleanor, not in that way. She wants your love, your forgiveness, she wants your protection—but, she must, and shall have, her independence!"

Mrs. Lassar turned to him, pale with surprise.

"What are you talking about?" she demanded, shrilly. "What right have you to dictate what Franchesca shall or shall not do? You transcend your privileges, old friend though you are!"

Van Wyn bowed with all the courtly dignity for which he was famous.

"Because, Mrs. Lassar, I hope to take upon myself the responsibility of Franchesca's future. I have the honor to beg your approval of my request for your daughter's hand."

For once Mrs. Lassar was speechless. Pushing back the hair from her eyes, she stared at Van Wyn as though she had never before seen him.

"You want to marry Franchesca?" she asked, slowly. A flash almost of jealousy, and certainly of annoyance, went through her—jealousy of the devotion she had always imagined attached to herself, then the thought of Franchesca's great resemblance to herself accounted for the miracle and half condoned it.

He bowed again.

"I do. I have spoken to Franchesca in the presence of Mrs. Corlier, and, with your consent, the matter is settled. My social position you already know. I shall, of course, settle a sufficient personal estate upon your daughter—the town house and my property at Aix—at my death she becomes my sole heir. My lawyer—"

Mrs. Lassar stopped him with a gesture.

"Do not let us dwell upon this sordid side," she said, quickly. "Franchesca—" she hesitated. A vista of triumph opened before her. She fairly heard herself speaking with polite superiority of "My daughter, Mrs. Van Wyn"—social prestige, millions, a connection in England inferior to none—and this—all this, for Franchesca, the black lamb. Courtlandt must be mad, but what did that matter?

"I am so surprised, Courtlandt," she said, at last, "that I can not at once find words. Of course, I could not have hoped or wished for anything more desirable for Franchesca. You have an unusual influence over her, and, doubtless you, with your tact and force, can easily overcome in her the faults that, poor invalid that I am, I have been unable to eradicate. I am glad that Franchesca has realized your kindness to her. I wonder she had the sense—" she added, to herself.

"Since my request meets with your approval, Eleanor, will you not grant me the favor of receiving Franchesca and Mrs. Corlier in a friendly and forgiving spirit? They are waiting outside in the carriage. May I not have the privilege of admitting them at once?"

"Tell her to come to me," said Mrs. Lassar, in a voice that trembled slightly. She pressed her hand over her well corseted heart. "Courtlandt—assist me to the lounge." She sank back among her pillows, lifting a little gold salts bottle to her fine, straight nose.

Van Wyn hurried from the room, and came face to face with the butler.

"Will you tell the ladies in the carriage that Mrs. Lassar wishes to see them."

The butler flew down the steps, and a moment later a silken frou-frou on the stairs announced the arrival of the two culprits.

"I have told your mother," said Courtlandt, softly, as taking Franchesca's hand he led her toward the lounge.

Mrs. Lassar opened her eyes feebly,

as one recovering from a prolonged faint.

"My child!" she murmured, "I trust you appreciate the great good fortune that has come to you. And I hope and pray that the consideration and love you have failed to give me may not be denied to your future husband." She turned to Kitty, who giggled helplessly. "No doubt you have not realized how much I have suffered. However, I have long ceased to expect either gratitude or unselfishness in this world. Youth is always unkind."

"Mother!" said Franchesca, brokenly, "mother, please forgive me—forgive us!" She held out her arms impulsively. But Mrs. Lassar, fearing for her hair, shrank back.

"A mother always forgives," she murmured, martyrdom in her tones. "Your room is ready when it pleases you to return."

"We announce the engagement, then," said Kitty, with an eye to business.

Franchesca hesitated.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lassar. "Mr. Lassar will be pleased."

An awkward silence fell over the company. Franchesca clung to Courtlandt's hand convulsively. Kitty tangled her fingers in and out among the chrysoprase balls of the chain from which depended her inevitable puff-box. Mrs. Lassar inhaled deeply from her smelling bottle.

"I must ask you to excuse me," she said, at length, "I am quite overcome."

"I hope you won't feel any the worse for—for this excitement," cooed Kitty in her best society voice.

Van Wyn arose. Mrs. Lassar extended a drooping hand.

"Dinner at seven, Courtlandt—of course, you'll come. You may remain with me, Franchesca."

Mrs. Corlier rustled to the door, followed by Van Wyn. The returned prodigal accompanied them to the lower hall.

"Don't stay away long, Partner, dear," she begged. "I feel so awkward, and I know I shan't be able to keep up

this story of Kitty's about being in the country."

"You've got to!" exclaimed the chap-eron. "Now, for goodness' sake, remember the sacrifices I have made for you, and don't spoil everything!"

Franchesca hesitated.

"You'll find out about Mr. Goreing, won't you? If he's any better—I can't very well make inquiries, you know, and I'm so anxious."

"I'll let you know," said Van Wyn. The door closed.

"Ouff!" cried Kitty, gathering up her skirts, "ouff! that's over with! Heavens, what a relief! I could scream—I'll positively faint. Courtlandt, I'll drive you home, and do, for goodness' sake, rest! I never saw you look so worn. Telephone for Dr. Gage, and let him fix you up."

Van Wyn lay back in the carriage, exhausted, but his thoughts were not of himself.

"Poor little girl!" he said, anxiously, "I do hope Eleanor will treat her gently, but I suppose the inquisition is well under way by this time, and she is such an unconvincing liar. Well, it won't last long, thank Heaven!"

"Oh," said Kitty, "when I think that I shall have this whole afternoon and evening for my angel puppy dog and my own Boodle, I forget everything else—even you and Fran. Tell me, Courtlandt, do I look homely—do I look tired and haggard? You see, Boodle sees me so often that I have to keep up appearances. Here you are at your palatial residence. Please, please do be careful of yourself, and tell James, 'home.'"

There was jubilation in the last word. Van Wyn smiled as he gave the order, and slowly climbed the steps.

"William," he said, as the man opened the door, "I'm going to rest for an hour; tell Victor not to disturb me. William, send a message to the Boston hospital to inquire Mr. Goreing's condition—prepay the answer."

Entering his room with a sigh of relief, he paused a moment by the wide Italian marble mantelpiece. Before him, in a silver frame, a picture of Fran-

chesca smiled down. "Dear little girl," he said, softly. A flash of pain shot through him, and then—blackness.

An hour passed. The valet tapped softly, and receiving no reply, silently opened the door and entered. What he saw made him drop the neatly folded garments from his arm with a cry of alarm.

On the floor, before the chimneypiece, lay Van Wyn in a huddled heap. Victor raised his master in his arms. Franchesca's picture fell from the limp hand, rattling on the carpet. With frightened zeal Victor applied every restorative. Unconsciousness persisted. A hasty summons for the physician was telephoned. Then the Lassars and Corliers were notified. The servants trooped anxiously in to view the master and offer suggestions. Pinched and white Van Wyn lay upon the great Empire bed, nerveless and relaxed.

When Franchesca arrived she found the doctor in the hall.

"Tell me at once—tell me the worst!" she gasped.

"My dear, my dear," deprecated Mr. Lassar, as he hastily rubbed his hands and coughed uneasily. He was very unhappy, but his wife had insisted that he must accompany his stepdaughter.

The physician's face was grave.

"Come into the parlor," he said. "I'll tell you all there is to know. You are Miss Cross? Yes; I told the valet to notify the closest friends and relatives—there, be brave—one can never foretell accurately in these matters. The stroke has passed quickly, and he is now perfectly conscious, and can speak. Still, I must not conceal the fact that the heart action is very weak and irregular."

Franchesca buried her face in her hands, pressing her aching eyes with tense fingers to keep back the tears. The blankness of grief numbed her senses. A ring at the bell announced Kitty and her husband. She paid no attention to their entrance, did not even raise her head, as her friend's voice,

sharpened by anxiety, rapidly questioned, and the doctor again detailed the terrible news. "Dying"—"dying"—the word used to mean something—now it was bereft of sense, a name for a thing impossible and unknown. "Unconscious for hours"—unconsciousness was a sort of death. Good heavens! an hour—all sorts of things could happen in an hour it seemed, and yet an hour was so short. Her mind drifted on stupidly. She could not control its wanderings. She lifted her head as Kitty, with a gasp, burst into tears and fled to the shelter of her husband's arms.

Mr. Lassar, seated on the extreme edge of his chair, gazed miserably at the group before him, then at the doctor, and at last at the floor.

A hysterical laugh arose in Franchesca's throat—it broke in a cry so forlorn, almost animal in its pain, that it startled her into consciousness.

"I want to see him—may I go to him?" she begged.

The doctor, familiar as he was with scenes of despair and sorrow, was moved by the tragedy of her face.

"Not yet," he said, kindly, laying a fatherly hand on her shoulder. "Don't despair, it may pass, there is always hope. I wanted to prepare you for the worst. If I can let you speak to him I will, but you must contain yourself."

"I will, oh, I will!" she wailed. "Only let me come. Can't I take care of him—can't I stay with him? I know so well what to do and how he likes everything. I'd be better than any nurse, indeed, I would—and I'd give my life for his, most gladly."

"My dear, my dear!" stammered Mr. Lassar. "Indeed—indeed, her mother—her mother and I would never consent."

Franchesca heard him.

"I shall stay here—I'll be here night and day till he wants me." She caught the doctor by his coat lapels and held him fast. "Listen," she begged, under her breath, "tell him—they won't let me stay. Tell him to let us be married as soon as he can, so I can take care of him—tell him that from me. Oh, you don't know; it's all my fault that he's

dying, and I must help—I must, or I shall go mad!"

The doctor's eyes opened with astonishment.

"I will deliver your message, Miss Cross. I must go now, and will inform you of any change in my patient's condition."

He passed between the portières that swung heavily in place behind him. Here was a pretty complication. A hastily summoned trained nurse stood at the foot of the bed, replacing a clinical thermometer in its little black case. She moved away as the physician entered and bent above the drawn white face on the pillows.

Van Wyn opened his eyes slowly. There was a question in their depths—"What are my chances?"

The doctor looked up with forced cheerfulness.

"A most rapid recovery, quite remarkable, Miss Wilson."

The nurse smiled and nodded perfunctorily. The eyes would not be so answered. They sought the doctor's face with a force of will that made the stereotyped phrases of consolation die upon his lips. "I wish to know the exact truth."

In spite of himself the doctor told, "One chance in twenty—in forty."

Van Wyn's eyes closed. The nurse looked up surprised. She had not yet learned the power of Van Wyn's personality.

"How long?" Van Wyn for the first time had spoken. Once more his questioning glance sought the doctor's face. Again the answer was drawn forth reluctantly: "Perhaps a few days—or," he added, hastily, in his best professional manner, "you may recover completely. You have every chance. It depends largely upon your co-operation."

Never had such a thing happened to the physician before in the whole course of his highly successful career—the will of a sick man nigh the very doors of death had overruled him, forced him against his better judgment to give information that should remain hidden by all the laws and conventions of the

medical profession. The doctor moved away from the bed, but the question that his patient next addressed to him brought him to the bedside again.

"Could I go through the ceremony of marriage?"

"Perhaps—later," temporized the doctor.

"Now," said Van Wyn. "I want to leave her my fortune, my name, and her freedom." Van Wyn spoke with greater ease, his words came with less effort. A little color found its way to his waxen cheeks.

The doctor hesitated. With whom could he consult? There were no close relatives that he knew. He began to long for the arrival of Dr. Gage, his partner, and Van Wyn's warm, personal friend. Unfortunately, he had been away when Victor's distracted summons had reached the office. But hours had elapsed. He must come soon.

The sick man seemed to read his thoughts.

"Gage will understand," he said, slowly, and closed his eyes. Silence reigned in the sick room. The slow pulsations of the clock alone disturbed the quiet.

In the drawing-room Mr. Lassar walked the floor nervously, his suggestions as to the propriety of a return to his home having met with no response. Corlier, in the far corner, his hands deep in his pockets, admired his wife, who, having had her own relief of tears, had turned to the impossible task of comforting Franchesca. But Franchesca was beyond comforting. Franchesca, in an agony of spirit, heaped upon herself all the reproach of the catastrophe.

In the hallway, hurried feet passed up and down. The heavy street door opened to a vigorous ring, and softly closed again. Low voices were audible, quick orders given. Franchesca heard nothing. On Kitty's shoulder she poured out her heart in misery and self-accusation.

The curtains parted once more, revealing Gage. He turned to Lassar.

"It is Mr. Van Wyn's request that the

marriage arranged between himself and Miss Cross take place at once. At present he is perfectly conscious and able to go through the ceremony. We do not know what change a few hours may bring to our poor friend."

"I don't know—Mrs. Lassar—the matter must be considered," Lassar hesitated.

Franchesca sprang to her feet, the tears streaming down her blazing cheeks.

"Of course I will. I don't care what any one says. My place is here, and he shan't die! I won't let him die! Yes, yes, Dr. Gage, send for some one to marry us. I'm of age, I don't need anybody's consent!"

He took her outstretched hands in his.

"So be it, then. It may be his last request."

"The telephone!" gasped Lassar, "I must consult Eleanor!"

What followed seemed dream-like and unreal. To Franchesca it was never quite clear. There were blanks in her memory, as if her tortured brain refused further comprehension. Only when she found herself standing by the bed where Van Wyn lay, did the mists depart. She became vividly conscious of the words she spoke—of the solemn hour—of the white face of her husband, Kitty's bowed head and the anxious faces of the physicians.

It was over! With a sigh Van Wyn's head settled heavily upon the pillow, his mouth contracted by a spasm of pain.

"You must go now," said Gage, gently raising Franchesca to her feet. "There must be absolute quiet."

She lifted Courtlandt's limp hand to her lips and kissed it reverently.

"Come," said Kitty. Mechanically she obeyed.

On the stairs they met Victor. He bowed ceremoniously.

"Mrs. Van Wyn, a telegram." He handed her the thin yellow envelope, addressed to his master.

Franchesca tore it open.

"We are happy to say Tracy will

live—operation successful." It was signed by Tom Goreing.

"I am so glad—so glad!" she said, sharply. "At least I haven't killed him, too—I am—so—so—glad!"

The last word was a sigh—Francesca had fainted.

CHAPTER VIII.

The train from San Francisco puffed into the Del Monte station, discharged a fashionably-dressed, voluble crowd, and glided on to old Monterey, where a heterogeneous throng of Portuguese, half-breeds, Salvation Army lassies and landscape painters alighted.

The air was deliciously cool and bracing, sweet with pine odors, strong with salt spray, alive with the murmur of both sea and trees, and Goreing drew a long breath as he found himself standing upon the rough platform. Refusing the jolty shelter of the stage, he started, grip in hand, through the gathering dusk in the direction of the old town.

"Hope it hasn't changed," he murmured, "but this plague of tourists is worse than locusts—eats up everything root and branch. There's the old Custom House, anyway."

He glanced to the right at the tall pole set from the gallery of the rambling white structure that had once held the revenues of a Spanish province. A turn in the road cut off his view, and he found himself in the one and only shop street.

Before him the white, low houses scrambled up the hill irregularly. At the end of the avenue the poster-covered adobe walls of a crumbling building showed dimly. Toward the bay the road led to the turn by the Custom House, and thence onward through Pacific Grove to the cypresses and red rocks of the coast.

How well it all came back to him. Before Mme. Bonifacios' walled garden, where the famous roses nodded high in the evening breeze, he paused for a moment. Mme. Bonifacios' sad little love story seemed very touching now,

where formerly it had been merely picturesque.

At last he found the hotel near the brewer's garden, with the flower-covered summerhouse. It was all unchanged. The lazy proprietor and the weary waitress were the same. The little room overlooking the street, drowsily awakened from time to time by the jangle of the passing horse cars, was gently hospitable.

He stood at the casement looking absently down at the loungers, picturesque, greasy, incongruous, in their twentieth century clothes. Now and then a smartly-dressed couple in walking togs, or an obvious tenderfoot astride a sturdy, well-mannered cowpony, proclaimed the proximity of the fashionable watering place. Goreing sighed and turned away.

After a hasty toilet and an untasted dinner, he once more set off at a swinging pace in the direction of the great hotel. The stars were very low and bright, the night still and expectant. His heart beat hard as he turned into the deep shadows of the park.

His feet found and kept familiar paths, yet he turned aside from the main sweep of the lawn, wandering among the ghostly cacti of the Arizona garden, by the high, soft-scented box hedges of the maze, almost to the willow borders of the Laguna del Rey.

He retraced his steps. The huge bulk of the house, glaring with a thousand eyes, seemed a menacing monster, and, as if to add the last touch of unrest to his shaken nerves, the music of the orchestra sifted through the windows to throb and die under the mighty branches of the ancient trees. Now that he had come so far for the one purpose, he found himself fearing the very thought of it.

Somewhere there, within a stone's throw, she was—she whom he had found lost to him when he woke from his long, unconscious wanderings with Death. Yet with the thought of her nearness his mood changed to great and sudden joy. "You are going to see her—going to see her!" his heart sang. All hesitation vanished. He hurried

forward, up the wide steps, onto the crowded verandas. Somewhere near she was—somewhere near, and he must feast his eyes unobserved. He settled himself in the shadow, sitting nervously on the veranda rail, and tried to picture just how she would look. It was so long since he had seen her. A year, a whole year! Had she changed?

A whining voice smote upon his ear.

"Yes, the automobile is such a treasure. My daughter, Mrs. Van Wyn, does not care for it. Courtlandt has always preferred horses, you know. Oh, dear, yes, indeed, he has some of the handsomest I have ever seen!" Mrs. Van Wyn has hers sent on from New York—you find it so—the resemblance between us is very striking. I may have been that that first attracted Courtlandt—indeed, he quite brought Franchesca up. His kindness to me after my first husband's death I shall never forget. Oh, a wonderful man—a most remarkable man; with all his world-wide fame he isn't half-appreciated. I often tell him that he and I are the two most patient invalids in the world. I will say for Franchesca, that she is really devoted to him. I hardly expected it, for she never showed the slightest sympathy for me in all my illness, as I often tell her. But then, marriage does work wonders with a girl, doesn't it?"

Goreing smiled grimly. Evidently Franchesca's marriage had not altogether freed her from the tyranny of the old yoke.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Lassar, rising from her chair with the assistance of a slender woman in white, "there's Franchesca now. I must speak with her. You'll excuse me, won't you?"

His heart throbbed. Franchesca—Franchesca—there she was at last, fully revealed under the glaring electric light of the drawing-room. He leaned against the veranda pillar and gazed through the long French window. Graceful, gentle, beautiful, across the room she passed, by the side of a wheelchair. For an instant his eyes rested upon the white, drawn face of Van

Wyn with a throb of reluctant sympathy—then they sought once more the gracious vision of girlish loveliness.

"Good heavens! is that you, Tracy Goreing!" He started guiltily, with an impulse to vault the low railing and seek the friendly darkness of the park. A small, bejeweled hand fell upon his arm, a pair of very bright, black eyes peered into his, then glanced quickly into the drawing-room.

The invalid chair and the girl slowly walking beside it, had reached the door. There was silence till the last serpentine fold of Franchesca's draperies disappeared.

"Does she know you're here?" demanded Kitty.

"Oh, no," he answered, simply. "I never intended she should."

There was a pause.

"If you should give me your arm," she remarked, "and I were to hold on very tight, I *might* be able to walk without falling, even with my very high heels and my very long gown—even if we went out into that heaven-born pool of shadow where the big pines are."

A moment later they were alone in the velvet darkness of the night world.

"You will wonder, no doubt," said Kitty, giving her companion's arm a guiding push, "how I know that there is a comfortable seat under that obstacle in front of us which is a tree. I assure you it is from occupying it with my own angel Boodle—and no one else. There will be no scene when he misses me, for he thinks I am always perfectly right. But what will be said in that scandal factory over there will be such —"

"I didn't mean—" he began.

"I know you didn't—but I did. You're going to let the poor child alone, aren't you?"

They seated themselves on the historic bench of Boodle's devotions.

"I told you I didn't intend her to see me; and I didn't expect to meet any one I knew. But since the kind gods have sent you, and there's no use bluffing, you'll tell me about her—the things I want to know. She's well, I see that. Is she happy, too?"

Kitty was silent a moment.

"Yes," she said, softly, "very, very happy. She's the most devoted soul I ever knew—she's wonderful! The only thing that worries her seems to be an absurd idea she has, that poor Van Wyn's paralysis was brought on by the strain and exertion of his search for her. When he was taken ill I felt that if he died she would die, too, or take the veil, or something. I never heard such self-accusation—and you know how she had always adored him. The odd thing is—and it isn't odd, either—I mean it shows how strangely things sort themselves in this world. Van Wyn does nothing but heap reproaches on his own head because he is an invalid. It's—well—pathetic." Kitty gulped. "He wanted to give her freedom, he wanted to guide, comfort, help her when he asked her to marry him. He thought he was dying when the ceremony was performed, and now he feels he has taken her young life and made it subservient to his helplessness. Each is trying to make up to the other for the wrong each feels has been unwittingly done, and that great and beautiful affection of theirs has grown to a single devotion that is blind and deaf to everything in the world. It's most beautiful, and most sad!—and if I let myself get worked up to crying, I shall have a red nose—and I've forgotten to bring my powder puff."

Goreing sighed.

"The look in her face has changed," he said. "There's depth, and—something—"

"It's the motherhood of her nature." Kitty's voice was tender with a sweetness her tea-table adorers would have been surprised to hear. There was another pause.

"Yes," she went on, "he wanted so much to take her father's place—instead he has become the child in all but mind. After all, I don't know, it is perhaps the very best thing that could have happened. She has grown to be a splendid woman. Responsibilities have brought maturity without detracting anything from the freshness of her comprehension—and she is doing great

work, too. Some day, we'll all hear from her, and be run after because we are her friends. The lions' playmates, you know—and you," she said, suddenly—"you've improved—you're not the same. A year ago I couldn't have talked myself out to you this way."

"Aren't we all changed?" he asked. "A year ago could you have talked this way yourself?"

"Oh, dear me, yes," she laughed her old mirthful giggle. "I've always been the same—only—I am affected by the personality of others. I am what they allow me to be. You don't understand that, do you? You're not a woman, so you couldn't. There are great areas of feminine psychology that man is unable to explore—not that any man would admit that—in all honesty, too. They simply can't see the forbidden country, so they say it isn't there. How long are you going to stay here?" she demanded.

"I'm going back to-morrow. I'm staying in the village, not at Del Monte. You won't say anything about my having been here, will you?"

The look of scorn cast upon him was lost in the darkness.

"I should think not," she said, shortly; "and, by the way, Tracy, don't go on the afternoon train, for my angel Boodle goes to the city on business—there's no use your meeting him, you know. Take me back to the hotel now, please. You couldn't see her again to-night; she has gone to their sitting-room to read to him. Good-by, then. We never know what Fate has in store, do we? And when you see dear little old New York again, kiss a policeman or a lamppost or a paving stone for me. Good-by!"

With a wave of her hand she dismissed him at the steps. He turned, smiled to her, cast a last look at the huge, illuminated caravansary, and disappeared into the night.

Kitty replaced a strayed lock or so, tapped her very red lips with the tip of a meditative finger, and slowly ascended the stair.

"Ah!" she sighed, "what a farce-

tragedy the world is! I must find Boul Miche or Boodle—I'm becoming serious." On the veranda she hesitated a moment, nodding to her own thoughts.

Unfortunately, even the blandishments of Boul Miche and what she termed the "delicious asininity" of Boodle failed to raise her spirits, and her maid, summoned at a remarkably early hour the next morning, found her mistress roundly indignant with the Fates for having provided a restless night.

"I look like a fright! I feel as if my face were fried—stiff at the edges and soft in the middle," she wailed. "Mind, don't you ever let me forget my powder puff again when I go out. Give me that white duck short skirt. Now go and beat on Mrs. Van Wyn's door, and tell her I'll join her at her abominable early worm breakfast."

"So glad!" came Franchesca's voice from the corridor. "I was just coming to wake you up and make you walk or ride. It's the most heavenly morning."

"Come in," called Kitty. "Here, just pin in that belt. Fran, my dear, I feel like an old, old hen with the pip. You look like a hateful, chirpy skylark. It's no use, my dear, I am a nightingale—no dawn hymns for me unless I've stayed up all night. What are the plans for the day?"

"Breakfast," said Franchesca, "I'm starved! I haven't a thought beyond food. I've been for a walk on the beach—that beautiful sand—if you don't hurry with your frills I shall eat all that delicious-looking red paste on the bureau!"

"Do," said Kitty, calmly, adjusting a rebellious hairpin. "Boodle has chewed off quarts of that, and it never did him the least bit of harm. You can season it with that powder in the puff jar; he has frequently recommended the combination."

Franchesca, grown suddenly grave, stabbed the pincushion with its owner's best turquoise hatpin.

Kitty, glancing from her own reflection to that of her visitor, started.

"I'm ready, come," she said. Half-way down the corridor she paused

abruptly. "Did you go down to the station to see Mrs. Morgan and the Mengesses off?"

"Yes," said Franchesca, absently.

"Ah!" murmured Kitty, "I should have remembered they were going by that early train. What an idiot! What a scatterbrain I am! I should have remembered—and Goreing on that train!"

CHAPTER IX.

The whole world was alive and stirring. The wind shook every leaf and needle of the trees, rippled the short grass and set the ivy undulating.

Birds flew by on flashing wings, the sharp canter of horses' hoofs sounded on the drives, the laughing voices of men and women on pleasure bent echoed cheerily under the high tree arches. Deep and strong through all rumbled the long growl of the impatient sea.

Among his pillows lay Van Wyn, rigid, white; the only thing in all the landscape to which the vivid morning brought no renewal of life. No color came to warm the waxen pallor of his face, the lines about his mouth deep cut, as if chiseled in stone, did not relax. Only his eyes looked out upon the world and smiled sadly.

The servant wheeled the chair slowly along the paths, pausing now and then at some favorite point of view, turning finally toward the nook, where every morning the little party gathered, practically sure of untroubled privacy. Great pines gave shelter from the winds, and in an open space the sun shone uninterruptedly down to bless his worshippers, the cacti, transplanted there from their distant desert homes.

A spirit very peaceful, yet very living, brooded in this unfrequented corner of the Arizona garden. The air seemed genial, the half animal vegetation companionable, the silence friendly. The buzz and hum of innumerable insects made drowsy summer personal and near.

The two girls were already seated when the invalid chair came into view.

Franchesca, with a nod, dismissed the servant, and wheeled her charge to the accustomed place in the shade of a mammoth live oak.

Enjoining silence, with a mysterious smile she pointed to a busy family of humming birds, fearlessly going about their business almost at her knees. They darted back and forth from the heavy red blooms of a flowering cactus, then with a whirr, rose, like glowing sparks of topaz and emerald, and disappeared.

"Oh, what a morning!" sighed Kitty, contentedly. "One could drink this air!"

"My stirrup cup," said Courtlandt, so low that Franchesca, occupied with the evolutions of a butterfly, did not hear.

Kitty started, glancing apprehensively first at the sick man then at Franchesca.

Van Wyn's eyes were fastened upon his wife's face with a look of ineffable yearning.

"Have you noticed — her — eyes? Have you seen the look?" he asked, softly.

"What—what—do you mean—what do you mean?" whispered Kitty, blushing guiltily.

Van Wyn half smiled.

"We know," he answered with difficulty. He settled farther back among the pillows as if the effort to speak had exhausted him.

Again there was silence.

Kitty gulped.

"He understands, he knows she is in love," she thought, "and Franchesca no more dreams of what is written all over her than a wall realizes its poster. And what brought it to a focus? Two words at the railway station—not that, perhaps—a look, a memory!"

The silence deepened, the shadows withdrew close under the trees, even the wind died down. The merry-makers had dispersed. Only the ever clamorous sea roared its challenge to the land, and the bees murmured on over their work.

Kitty glanced suddenly at Van Wyn. How collapsed and shrunken he had become! "The will to live has gone—

the end will come quickly now," she thought sadly. A thrill shot through her—a tingling, electrical shock. She would have risen to her feet, but her strength deserted her, she remained inert and tongue-tied, realizing the imminent personal presence of death.

Franchesca smiled softly at the sunshine. Kitty could have screamed and shaken her.

Van Wyn turned his head painfully that his eyes might more easily rest on the girl's dreaming face.

"Haven't you anything for me to criticise to-day?" he asked, with evident effort.

Kitty sat paralyzed, quivering, yet conscious that to all outward seeming she was calm, indifferent, hideously commonplace; that the sun felt hot upon her shoulder, and that her hands were occupied of their own accord in making her parasol trace something in the gravel.

Franchesca turned quickly.

"Not much—just a verse—they're not good, either—I'm ashamed."

"Read," said Van Wyn.

Franchesca smoothed a crumpled paper on her knee.

"Oh, love, if life be bound about by sleep,
Then surely dost thou bind my life to thee.
My soul, to make me live in memory,
Doth all night long its dear dream vigils keep.

"I had not guessed thy words had sunk so deep,
Nor that I knew thine every smile and tone
That now intrude whene'er I am alone,
The harvest of thy speech my heart doth reap.

"Through all my busy days I plan and strive
To banish from my world all thought of thee,

Till, as the twilight drifts across the sea,
I can no longer keep thee from my heart;
But as the silent silver stars arrive,
Thou comest to thine own again—and me."

Franchesca's face was flushed, almost to self-consciousness. "It's wretched doggerel; I don't know what possessed me to write such stuff!"

With nervous fingers she tore the paper.

"Don't," said Van Wyn. "Don't
tear——"

His voice had a strange, unearthly
sound, an indescribable note of suffer-
ing. Franchesca sprang forward with
a cry, her eyes wide with alarm. Fall-
ing on her knees, she caught his hands.

"What—what is it?" she begged.
"Speak, speak to me! Oh! Partner,

come back! Don't leave me—don't
leave me!"

The tingling presence grew, pal-
pable, terrifying. There was silence.

Slowly Van Wyn's eyelids lifted, in-
finite love and infinite peace smiled out
upon Franchesca's agonized face.

"The partnership's dissolved, dear;
the senior member must retire!"



SONG

BREATHE it, exult in it,
All the day long,
Glide in it, leap in it,
Thrill it with song.
Boundless it clings to thee—
Life-giver rare—
Kind nurse that wearies not—
Such is the Air.

Wake to it smilingly;
Greeting thy eyes,
Comes the day's miracle,
Fresh with surprise.
Nature's revealer
At morning or night—
Hail to the Cheerer!
Such is the Light.

Lave in it, sport in it,
Dream on its breast,
Lulled by the infinite
Sweetly to rest.
Still it will bear thee
To windward or lee—
Trust to its strong arms!
Such is the Sea.

Dearest, one element
Waiteth for thee;
Far it surpasseth
Air, light and sea.
Come and find rest in it,
All else above;
Come, and be blest in it!
Such is my Love.

CHARLES H. CRANDALL.

A COURT OF FRENCH CLAIMS

By Elizabeth Duer

THE villa was perched on the cliffs overlooking the sea. To one, coming through the great hall into the library, the ocean looked so close that its restless swell made one tremble lest some huge roller, grown frolicsome, should sweep through the French window and play boisterously with the furniture.

A lady was writing at her davenport near the open window; writing with an interest so absorbing that it made her indifferent to the sea breeze that was ruffling her charming coiffure and waltzing with the frills of her morning dress.

The puffing of an automobile distracted her attention, the bell tinkled and the footman announced:

"Mr. Gordon."

Mrs. Preston's frown changed to a smile.

"Dear friend," she said, "I was in the act of writing to you."

He nodded.

"I know," he said, "I have seen him—he has come."

The lady's interest deepened.

"And you came at once to tell me." This with commendation.

"Only incidentally," he answered. "I came to seek advice."

"You, too, are in trouble? I need not ask the occasion. The woes of middle age are born of the youthfulness of the young."

He nodded again.

"That's it, Clarissa—how did you guess? My niece—poor Gus' daughter—has just been discovered in some presumably innocent intrigue, and Lady Violet Hicks (your friend), who sells her title to chaperon young girls, has resigned her position in fear of my dis-

pleasure. What shall I do with the girl? She is in Newport now!"

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Preston, "of all things, don't let her stay here, where every one talks scandal unless they are making it. Charter a new sheepdog and send her straight back to Europe."

"The advice suits me. Thank you, dear lady." He kissed her hand and sat down.

"Now it's my turn," she urged. "You have seen my future son-in-law; what is he like?"

"He is like a pink blush-rose, and he smells like the rose's attar. His curls are done in ridges like Clytie's, and—don't be shocked, Clarissa—I swear, under the thin silk of his shirt, I saw his ribs of whalebone!"

The lady groaned.

"And yet this is Margaret's choice. A girl with ideals and courageous opinions; whose religion is the worship of the highest where she sees it; whose aim in life to extend her moral and intellectual vision; whose weakness an overfastidiousness. There must be something that you have overlooked in this Frenchman to account for Margaret's passion."

Gordon tapped his forehead for extenuations.

"We can say in his favor that he has remained true to Margaret through the year of your probation, as is evinced by his coming to ask her hand of you a week ahead of time. The flames of love have given wings to his heels."

"And thereby mistrusting with his ladylove, whose cruise on Flora's yacht may not be over till to-morrow. As soon as I heard of his arrival, I forestalled the possibility of a visit from him by writing to say it would not be

agreeable to me to receive him for several days."

"You hope by delay to persuade Margaret to reconsider?"

Mrs. Preston sprang to her feet and began pacing the floor.

"Why was I fool enough last year to let her go abroad with Flora! Why did her poor father leave her independent of me! Why did God make Frenchmen! Why is youth callow?"

"Ah! why?" said the pessimistic Gordon.

"You find him an extreme example of Gallic effeminacy?"

Gordon raised a deprecating hand.

"Why impugn the virility of a whole nation?" he remonstrated. "Get into my motor and you shall see for yourself; in this town a newcomer is not hard to unearth."

The lady sent for her hat and parasol, and Gordon helped her into the automobile with praiseworthy care for her long flounced train, then springing in himself, he started the huge machine after a few unexpected and nerve-destroying jerks.

The sharp turn at the gate was passed in safety, and Mrs. Preston gave a sigh of relief as a surreptitious glance behind assured her that the stones of her gate posts still stood upon each other. Another turn, and then, with much tooting of the horn, they swung into Bellevue Avenue.

The carriage of two old ladies dodged from in front of them, and an old gentleman on a bicycle looked angrily over his shoulder at their vanishing backs.

The avenue was crowded and Mr. Gordon was forced to slow up opposite the wonderful white marble wall and iron gates of one of Newport's most talked-of places. The walls were discolored with rain and dust, the iron-work rusty and neglected, and, with a shrug for the shiftlessness of the rich, Mrs. Preston turned with an amused smile to look at a vacant field across the way, hired by the butlers and valets of Newport for their daily cricket.

"It all comes out of our pockets," she remarked.

As the automobile sped on again, it

seemed as if every one were hurrying toward the bathing place. Little one-horse victorias passed, filled most often with sightseers, two men and a woman, or perhaps with two little neat *attachés* from some of the legations, sitting side by side, gazing anxiously at the carriages, as if fearful they might fail to recognize last night's hostess. And there were private carriages with old ladies huddled down in untidy heaps, holding black sunshades in black-gloved hands; then girls on bicycles flew past, and governess-carts with pretty white-clothed children—everything and everybody seemed to be hurrying up or down the broad avenue, and the sun blazed over all.

The Casino was their first point. Gordon went upstairs to search through the club rooms, and Mrs. Preston crossed the green of the circular lawn and mounted the steps of the piazza. Here the band was playing gayly, but she was too eager in her quest to listen. She passed through to the other side of the building and looked down upon the tennis courts below. Women in wonderful dresses of muslin and lace, with more wonderful pearls about their throats and priceless parasols shading them, talked to sunburned girls in short white skirts and shirts, very warm and almost untidy from a hard game of tennis. Dapper, lazy little foreigners gazed with indifference through eyeglasses at the other men playing tennis madly in the hot August sun, and in and out among them all walked anxious hostesses, searching for a last eligible man for dinner that night.

But no one answering to Gordon's description of de Thoriac was to be seen.

Mrs. Preston rejoined that gentleman at the gate, and when she found he, too, had been unsuccessful, they determined to try Bailey's Beach as the most probable place at that hour of the day.

Here Sea-nymphs and Tritons were disporting themselves in the water, and the piazza of the bath house was full of young people in toilettes of the street or of the bath.

Leaning against the railing and smok-

ing cigarettes were two girls, laughing gayly. Mrs. Preston called Gordon's attention to the pair.

"A pretty face, the girl in the pink bathrobe!"

"That's your son-in-law!"

"Nonsense!" with incredulous warmth. "I mean *the* girl with the pink handkerchief around her throat."

"That is *de Thoriac*."

Mrs. Preston shut her eyes.

"It is sickening," she said. "Let us wait and see him go into the water."

"He isn't going into the water, Clarissa—he is posing on land. His complexion and curls disagree with that element."

At that moment a scream from a woman far out from shore startled the bathers. De Thoriac took off his bathrobe as he ran toward the water and, dashing in, brought the woman safe to land.

"The situation is not as simple as I supposed," the lady complained. "Our sybarite seems to have a strain of the heroic. I shall stay to congratulate him."

Mrs. Preston's eyes were brilliant with excitement, her color rivaled de Thoriac's own.

Gordon shrugged.

"You are easily swayed by a bit of claptrap. Shall I go and tell this Leander that you remove your embargo to his making your acquaintance?"

She assented.

After a delay of five minutes Gordon returned, murmuring quotations from de Musset.

"The gentleman received me in his bath house. I found him *'Moelleux comme une chatte, et frais comme une rose'* and at a stage of his toilet when, *'Il était nu comme Ève à son premier péché.'*"

Mrs. Preston made a gesture of displeasure, which elicited an apology, still in quotations.

"*Madame, excusez-moi—je commence ce conte.*"

"*Juste quand mon héros vient de sortir de bain.*"

"*Je demande pour lui l'indulgence, et j'y compte.*"

"Then spare me any further invasion of his privacy," she said.

"You are so easily depressed," Gordon continued. "I assure you preparations for better things were *en évidence*. His servant was heating his curling tongs in the flame of a silver alcohol lamp, and there was a display of fresh linen scented with violets and *peau d'Espagne*."

"I suppose you gave my message?" with some haughtiness.

"I said, a lady—perhaps known to him by name—in short, Mrs. Preston—desired to felicitate him upon his achievement. She was waiting for him outside."

"And he?" breathlessly.

"He said the routine of his toilet was apt to be slow, so that he should do himself the honor to wait upon Mrs. Preston—to whom he has letters—this afternoon."

The lady tapped her foot.

"Perhaps you'll go home, Clarissa!"

They disappear in the automobile.

The afternoon was laying its shadows on the sea. The flower beds in front of the Preston villa blazed red and gold in the level rays of the setting sun.

At the open door an idle young footman was throwing bits of biscuit to a bull-terrier, while he cast backward glances into the hall, lest his clerical-looking chief—the butler—should, in passing, discover his levity.

The crunch of wheels told the approach of a carriage, and de Thoriac alighted at the door.

The cool gray of his summer clothes was emphasized by the gardenia in his buttonhole. His only jewelry was the priceless pearl that fastened his white necktie, and his beautiful hands were guiltless of rings.

So closely did he follow the servant into the library, where Mrs. Preston sat making her tea, that she had barely time to receive without examining his card and letters of introduction, which she took from the footman and laid on the tea table. Crossing the room, she greeted her guest with some effusion.

"Ah, Monsieur de Thoriac," she said,

determining to control the situation, "I know you have come to ask almost the impossible at my hands, but let us waive such intimate questions for to-day——"

A puzzled look passed over his face, unnoticed by the lady, who continued:

"I was filled with admiration with your gallant rescue of the drowning woman this morning. How happy you are to have accomplishments so serviceable and wits so quick in applying them."

De Thoriac bowed slightly and murmured something about her kindness causing her to put too amiable an estimate on what he had done.

Mrs. Preston motioned him to a seat beside her tea table, where his letters were lying.

"I am so fortunate," he said, glancing at them, "as to be the bearer of a letter from the wife of the American Ambassador, and also from a mutual friend, Lady Violet Hicks, who charged me to let her know how I found her dear friend, Mrs. Preston."

Mrs. Preston turned over the envelopes.

"I recall them both with pleasure," she said. "But you, monsieur—you hardly needed letters—you come accredited to me by your friendship for my daughter, and even if——" She paused, uncertain how best to express her unwillingness to allow a foreign marriage.

"Mademoiselle, then, remembers me?" with pleasure in his tone.

"Only too well—I mean, most certainly she does. She is away at the moment on a yacht, but should return no later than to-morrow, perhaps to-day."

Involuntarily, they both glanced seaward.

"There is a large steam yacht making the harbor," Mrs. Preston exclaimed. "I fancy it is Mrs. Hellyer's," and, taking up a pair of marine glasses, she scanned the vessel.

"Mrs. Hellyer," he repeated. "It was with her Miss Preston was staying last year at Cowes during race week"; but his interesting reminiscences were interrupted at this point by a confusion of noises at the hall door.

There was the puffing of a motor, the

growling and yapping of dogs, the whistling and scolding of servants and, above all, the shrill shrieks of a woman's voice.

"Oh! save Zozo—he's killing him—he's killing him!"

De Thoriac tore open the door and disclosed the cause of the anguish.

In a space cleared by the frightened spectators the bull-terrier and a black Pomeranian were performing what looked like a death waltz for the smaller dog, for as they growled they turned with ever-present tails.

De Thoriac waited until the piebald mass gyrated his way, and then, seizing the bull-terrier by the throat, he choked him almost into an apoplexy and, while he held the struggling beast, the delicate hands seemed made of steel and the rose-like complexion never deepened its shade.

At the end of a long minute the bulldog relinquished his hold with a gurgle; his eyes were nearly out of his head, and a whisker of black hair hung from his lower lip. De Thoriac walked to the end of the veranda and dropped him down six feet on the grass below, where he sat, toad-like, like a dog in a dream.

In the meantime, the occasion of all this commotion—Miss Mimi Gordon—who has already been briefly introduced to the reader as "poor Gus' daughter"—was stroking the disordered chevelure of Zozo and responding to his indignant howls by tenderest caresses.

Mrs. Preston hastened to make what atonement she could for so inhospitable a reception.

"Let me send for Skerwood," she said, naming a vet of so aristocratic a *clientèle*, equine and canine, as placed him at the head of his profession.

Miss Gordon gratefully acceded.

Mrs. Preston, who believed in the authority of a summons, undertook to telephone herself.

Mimi, with her dog in her arms, trailed her white draperies into the library and sank upon a sofa behind the door. De Thoriac, who had been washing his hands after the episode of the dog fight, came airily into the room.

A faint murmur of "Henri" came

from the sheltered sofa. With a bound, the young man dropped beside her, while he whispered:

"Mimi, *bien-aimée*, n'es-tu pas un beau baiser pour ton mari?" and their lips met.

A moment later de Thoriac was admiring the view. Mrs. Preston entered with a slip of paper in her hand.

"Here is Skerwood's address. He cannot come, because Mr. Hock's hunter is showing symptoms of lock-jaw; but if the dog is sent to him he will be most pleased to look him over"—then remembering her duties as hostess, she hastened to add: "By the by, Mimi, you do not know the gentleman who so gallantly saved your little muff of a dog. Monsieur de Thoriac, I wish to present you to Miss Gordon."

De Thoriac bowed gravely; Mimi inclined her charming head.

De Thoriac, in his wonderful English, explained that he had a carriage waiting at the door and should esteem himself honored if Miss Gordon would permit him to take the Pomeranian to Skerwood, and afterward he would "return him to her at—" He paused to have the address supplied.

Mimi blushed prettily. She found Monsieur de Thoriac more than kind, and dear little Zozo would promise to behave bravely. A vet's hospital was hardly the place for a lady, was it? And Uncle Robert's house was "at the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Mud Pond Lane."

De Thoriac, with the dog, bowed himself out. Mimi threw herself on her knees before her hostess.

"Dear Mrs. Preston," she pleaded, "you have influence with my uncle; please, please ask him to let me stay here. Don't let him send me off again with a strange companion, just to get rid of me. Suppose Margaret were left alone in the world and were treated so?"

The elder lady's conscience gave her a prod.

"But, Mimi, you are a responsibility to a bachelor uncle. We have heard rumors of indiscretions on your part so

grave that Lady Violet preferred to withdraw from your charge."

Miss Gordon's indignation flamed.

"It isn't true," she said, springing to her feet. "Lady Violet was always our—I mean my friend. She only left me yesterday after my—tickets were bought for Newport, and just in time for her to catch her steamer."

"It would have been more conscientious, as well as more proper, if she had brought you here before deserting you and leaving you to travel with your maid"—and Mrs. Preston looked prim.

Mimi's eyes were gazing into the twilight gloom of the ocean.

"She's so romantic, dear Lady Violet," she sighed.

"She is culpably negligent, in my opinion," snapped Mrs. Preston.

Mimi waived the question of Lady Violet's chaperonage; her thoughts were elsewhere.

"Mrs. Preston," she said, "if I marry without Uncle Robert's consent, I forfeit to him half of my fortune. Do you think the money would console him for being flouted?"

There was a note of intention in Mimi's voice that sounded alarming. Mrs. Preston lost her nerve and showed fright.

"But, child—you never would—you never could do such a thing!"

"It is simply a question of love against dollars," the girl observed, tritely.

Mrs. Preston became once more the woman of the world, astute, patronizing.

"Ah, that's a feminine view of the situation. Now, I dare be sworn that with every forfeited dollar you'll lose a charm in most men's eyes."

"I'm glad to say one man thinks it well lost for love," said Mimi, triumphantly.

"You know you are not exactly a pauper if it is lost," insinuated Mrs. Preston, with a sarcastic smile, and Mimi lost her temper.

"Is every one sordid?" she cried. "I had expected higher views from you and Uncle Robert."

"Your uncle's views are neither low

nor sordid," Mrs. Preston answered, hotly. "His is plain, manly, common sense, bought by experience. He may be too high-minded to avail himself of that clause in your father's will, but I can promise you he will see that you are restrained from making a fiasco."

"So I supposed," returned Mimi, gathering up her feather boa and parasol. "All the same, there is some one I intend to marry; but as I prefer to be conventional when I can, and should prize my guardian's sanction, will you ask Uncle Robert to keep me with him a fortnight—a month—as he pleases?"

"Oh! this is desperate!" exclaimed poor Mrs. Preston. "Tell me at least who——" But the question was only answered by the gentle closing of the door. Mimi had left the house.

Indeed, it is sometimes well, after giving a broadside, to retire for the moment.

Such an unmasking of the enemy's guns required prompt action.

Mrs. Preston telephoned to Gordon that she desired to see him at once, and then she sank into an armchair and tried to bring the turmoil of her thoughts into order.

Two questions absorbed her attention. First, should she allow Margaret's engagement to de Thoriac? Secondly, what measures should she suggest in regard to Mimi, to restrain that wilful young person from committing an act of egregious folly? Margaret might arrive at any moment and put the fateful question, and Mrs. Preston must not be unprepared. The yacht she had seen making the harbor was surely Mrs. Hellyer's, and when Margaret knew that de Thoriac had arrived, she would attack her mother with a volume of eloquent insistence hard to resist.

The female mind has a habit of shirking consecutive thought and recording only impressions. At the end of half an hour Mrs. Preston knew she meant to yield to Margaret and to counsel such a wary and conservative course of conduct in Mimi's affairs as should at least delay the catastrophe—and yet she had pursued no conscious line of reasoning; her ideas, like the gold of Aaron, were

cast in the fire and "there came out this calf."

The clock struck half-past seven; it seemed idle to wait longer for Gordon. She was just leaving the room to go upstairs to dress for dinner when she met him in the hall, his usual calm distinctly ruffled, the furrow between his brows ominously deep.

"I know I'm late, Clarissa," he began, as he followed her back to the library, "but couldn't you postpone the sacred rites of dressing long enough to tell me what the devil you would do if——"

"If a large sum of money stormed your bank account," she finished for him.

"A Sapientia!" he exclaimed. "How shrewdly you do always guess my thoughts! But wait a little! I have had a most amazing aspirant for Mimi's hand—in fact, that was what detained me—and not approving of her choice, I gave an emphatic no. I fear I antagonized the lovers, who seem very determined. Of course, my refusal will leak out and all Newport will be saying it was greed and not conscience that prompted my opposition."

"And you shrink from furnishing a little healthy scandal?" maliciously.

Gordon looked sulky.

"No one exactly fancies being considered venal."

"Your shoulders are broad enough to bear their share of undeserved censure. Besides, you needn't keep the money. Invest it for her and let it roll up for five years. She has the true modern spirit, and by that time she will be slipping off the old marriage ring to make room for a new one, and you'll find a fresh maintenance for her will hardly be untimely."

Mrs. Preston's tone was acid—she didn't approve of Mimi—but Gordon was too much preoccupied to resent it.

"I see, you think she'll marry without leave," he said, irritably.

"I know she will. She said so plainly, here in this very room, not an hour ago. Perhaps, after all, it will be best to make a virtue of necessity and give your consent. Why don't you, Robert?"

Gordon eyed her sharply, while an expression of distrust came over his face.

"Because I don't fancy the young man's personality any more than you do."

"Than I do!" echoed Mrs. Preston. "How should I have fancies about Mimi's young man, whom I've never seen in my life?"

"But you have seen him; indeed, the thought just crossed my mind that you had been finessing the situation—making a cat's-paw of Mimi for your own purposes—but I see I was mistaken. I apologize."

Mrs. Preston looked deeply wounded.

"For shame, Robert, I'm not even in her confidence! Who is her lover? Tell me, quick!"

"The hero of the bath—de Thoriac!"

"Oh, my poor Margaret! How shall I tell her of such perfidy? The treacherous little fiend! And all day long I had been nursing a secret admiration for him."

"Admiration for a scented, curled, bangled, beribboned poodle! I'm ashamed of you, Clarissa—though I must confess he was manly enough in his interview with me just now."

"How did he justify his change of heart? Did he dare mention Margaret's name?" cried Mrs. Preston, with ever-rising indignation.

"I didn't give him time. I simply declined the honor, refused to discuss my reasons, and said the interview was at an end."

"And he submitted without a word? The little craven!"

"On the contrary, his bearing would have impressed me, if I had not known him a fortune-hunting foreigner. He said that, much as Mimi desired my consent, he himself was glad to do without it, as it proved the disinterested character of his affection."

"Mimi with only half her money is richer than Margaret!" sneered Mrs. Preston.

Here the sound of footsteps on a gravel path was faintly heard, and Mrs. Preston grew a shade paler.

"Can that be Margaret!" she ex-

claimed. "How can I crush her with this news? I'm growing such a coward." Then, with sudden fierceness, "Robert, if I were you, I'd lock up Mimi rather than let her marry such a man!"

As she spoke Mimi stepped in through the open window, followed by de Thoriac.

"And pray, why should I be locked up, Mrs. Preston?" she asked, looking indignant. "I thought you were my friend and, under that impression, I brought Henri here to plead our cause with Uncle Robert in your presence, imagining you would stand by us." Then, turning to de Thoriac, she added: "It takes all the repentance out of our confession, doesn't it, Henri?"

De Thoriac, gravely courteous, addressed Mr. Gordon.

"In our conversation just now, sir, I could not give you my crowning reason for desiring your approval of my marriage with Miss Gordon without first getting her consent to tell our secret." Here Mimi slipped her hand in his. "We were married yesterday in New York—only a civil marriage, you understand—in the presence of Lady Violet and a friend of mine. The religious service we reserved, hoping for your forgiveness."

"Now, that was handsome in you," said Gordon, with biting sarcasm. "To a gentleman who could be engaged to two ladies at the same time only one marriage must have seemed so meager!"

"Engaged to two ladies at the same time, sir," de Thoriac repeated, "you are laboring under some extraordinary illusion."

Mrs. Preston could no longer keep silence.

"In this country an engagement, even if in abeyance, is considered some impediment to forming new ties."

"I gather then, madam, that your engagements are more binding than your marriages," de Thoriac replied, with the air of the intelligent traveler seeking information.

Mimi, nearly in tears, looked helplessly from one to the other.

"Oh, if Margaret were only here, she would understand," she said, half crying.

Mrs. Preston was about to turn and rend her for venturing to mention Margaret's name in such a connection, when the sound she had been dreading made her heart stand still. A carriage was driving up to the door. Margaret was coming!

Poor Mrs. Preston walked quickly to the library door, which she threw open, and then, finding her courage oozing, she leaned against the side, too wretched to go forward to welcome her daughter.

Mimi and de Thoriac conversed in a low tone apart. Gordon stood swinging his eyeglass, while a smile of cynical enjoyment, in anticipation of the last act of the little comedy, was evident on his speaking countenance.

Across the hall came the gay chatter of half a dozen voices and cries of "Good-by, Flora," "So many thanks," "*Au revoir*," and almost before the carriage was again in motion, Margaret rushed into the house, followed by a dark, distinguished person in serge clothes.

"Mamma," she cried, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, "this is the Comte de Thoriac, who longs to make your acquaintance."

"De Thoriac," exclaimed Mrs. Preston, quite bewildered and glancing from one *prétendu* to the other.

Margaret's eyes followed her mother's.

"Why, you have another member of the family here," she said, "dear little Monsieur Henri. How glad I am to see you—and Mimi, too. Your brother has told me all the charming romance of your love affairs!"

"His brother?" echoed Mrs. Preston. "Were ever brothers so unlike!"

Relieved from the shadow of a tragedy, she warmly welcomed the elder de Thoriac, who, in his turn, kissed his brother warmly on each cheek.

Gordon shrugged his shoulders and walked to the window.

"It's positively indecent," he said; but no one remarked his displeasure.

Margaret, excited and happy, was making explanations to her mother.

"Flora hopes you will not be vexed with her for taking Philippe on our cruise" (she blushed as she pronounced the name), "but we met him at the landing just as we were about to start. He was stepping off the little steamboat just as we were getting into the launch, and the temptation was irresistible."

Mrs. Preston's curiosity was still unsatisfied.

"Did you and your brother cross the ocean together?" she asked.

But it was Henri who answered:

"Though we have both lost our hearts to Americans, we do not hunt in couples, Mrs. Preston. I came with Mimi and Lady Violet."

"Mimi," said Mrs. Preston, impulsively, "I have done you and Monsieur Henri de Thoriac the grossest injustice. I will make what amends I can. Robert!" she called to the figure in the distant window, "come here and forgive your young people."

"What do you want me to say?" he asked, loftily.

Margaret took both his hands.

"We want you to say that you will allow Mimi and Monsieur Henri to be married the same day I am."

The Comte de Thoriac now joined the group about Mr. Gordon.

"I hope, monsieur," he said, "you are going to give your charming niece to this best of good fellows, my little brother. I assure you, he is better than he looks," and he passed a ruthless hand over his brother's curls.

"He couldn't be worse than he smells," muttered Gordon, who hated perfumes; but aloud he answered graciously: "These young people have hardly left me a choice, Monsieur le Comte, but, nevertheless, I accede to your request."

Mimi, with a cry of pleasure, kissed her uncle's cheek.

"Dear Uncle Robert," she exclaimed, "how shall we ever thank you!"

Gordon glanced slyly at Mrs. Preston as he answered:

"By staying married."

A SHEPHERD IN LESBOS

By Bliss Carman

ALL night long my cabin roof resounded
With the mighty murmur of the rain;
All night long I heard the silver cohorts
Tramping down the valley to the plain;

All night long the ringing raindrops volley'd
On the hollow drumheads of the leaves
In a wild tattoo, while gusty hill-winds
Fifed The Young Pans' March about the eaves.

So all night within the mountain forest
Passed the shadowy forces at review;
And they bore me back to time's beginning
When the wonder of the world was new.

Then from out the gloom there came a vision
Of the beauty of the earth of old—
The unclouded face and gracious figure,
Filleted with laurel and green-stoled,

Such as Daphne wore the day she wandered
Through the silent beechwood of the god,
When a sun-ray through the roof of shadows
Wheeled and stole behind her where she trod.--

When the loveliness of earth, transfigured
By one touch of rapture, grew divine,
Ere it fled before the unveiled presence
To indwell forever its green shrine.

Like a mist I saw the hair's gold glory,
The grave eyes, the childish scarlet lip,
And the rose-pink fervor that afforded
Soul the sheath to fill from tip to tip.

On her mouth she laid a warning finger,
And her slow, calm, enigmatic smile
Told me, ere she spoke, one half the message;
Then I heard (my heart stood still the while):

AINSLEE'S

"Mortal, would'st thou know the maddening transport
No mere earth-born lover may attain,
Till some woodland deity hath loved him,
And her beauty mounted to his brain?

"Thenceforth he becomes, with her for mistress,
Master of the moods and minds of men,
Molding as he will their deeds and daring,
All their follies open to his ken;

"Yet is he a wanderer forever,
Without respite seeking the unknown.
Would'st thou leave the world for one who offers
But the beauty bounded by her zone?"

When I woke in golden morning dyeing
The dark valley and the purple hill,
Flushing at the doorway of the forest,
Flowered my mountain laurel, cool and still.

How I chose? Have ye not heard in Lesbos
Of a mad young shepherd by the shore,
Whose wild piping bids the traveler tarry
Some immortal sorrow to deplore?

On a morning by the river margins
Many a passer-by hath heard that strain,
Sweet and sad and strange and full of longing
As a bird-note through the purple rain.

In a maze the haunted music holds them
With its meaning past all guess or care;
With its magic note the lonely cadence
Swell and sinks and dies upon the air;

And they say, "It is the stricken shepherd
Whom the nymph's enchantment set astray,
And the spell of his bewildering vision
Holds him fast a lover from that day.

"His dark theme no mortal may interpret;
But forever when the wood-pipes blow,
Some remembered and mysterious echo
Calls us unresisting and we go."

THE SWAN

By Sarah Guernsey Bradley

MRS. BRONSON was rather attractive and decidedly well-intentioned—even her enemies admitted that—but all of Mrs. Bronson's geese were swans. That was an ornithological and historical fact, as well as a most wearing one.

Therefore, when, in the privacy of her charming little library she sat and raved to me over the wonderful mental, moral, spiritual, and physical charms of a certain Helen Irving, I swallowed the ravings with several grains of salt which had not lost its savor, and digested them accordingly.

Stripped of the friendly extravagancies, I gathered this much of Helen Irving—which *might* be true—she was about twenty-seven or eight, had big blue eyes, and auburn hair, was tall, but not awkwardly so, had traveled some, had written a book, of which I had never heard (and I pride myself upon my familiarity with the latest books), and would be at Mrs. Bronson's next "Thursday," to which I was most cordially bidden, and most eloquently urged.

Mrs. Bronson always exhibited her geese-swans (of which she had a choice collection) at her "Thursdays." One week, the *rara avis* was a struggling young tenor—how struggling, only his long-suffering auditors could fully realize and the elusive top note testify. Another week, a budding actress who was about to electrify all New York—a recruit from society; the information was conveyed in an awe-struck whisper—recited the "mercy speech," and it seemed to my poor masculine intelligence that the most merciful conclusion one could come to after the perform-

ance was that it was too *unmercifully* bad to be true. *Quasi* writers and painters were there in battalions, but never but once did I meet a single person who in any way lived up to his (or her) alleged swanhood.

That one exception, although undeniably a genius, subsequently ran off with the wife of Mr. Bronson's best friend, and was summarily deposed from swanhood; for morality was Mrs. Bronson's long suit. I admit that this made it hard for the geese; but that is mere detail.

I pleaded the reviewing of a book as my excuse for next Thursday.

"Nonsense; that won't take half an hour. I know how you men review books." And she winked the wink of one on the inside. "Please come. I *do* want you to know Helen Irving."

"Any designs on me?"

"No," she snapped, in the tone of one who meant "she wouldn't wipe her shoes on you."

"But," I protested, "I've been to so many of those Thursdays of yours——"

"Yes, I know," she interrupted; "and you have never liked any of the people. Oh, don't take the trouble to deny it. But even I admit that Helen Irving is different from the others. She is really, without any exaggeration, the most fascinating woman I have ever known. We met her last year at Florence. She was gathering material for some story of Florentine life. I fell in love with her at first sight. Bronson was pretty well smitten, too. And there were half a dozen men there who were ready to be absolutely devoted to her. But she never seemed to care a snap of her fingers for them."

"A deep one, eh?" said I, lazily.
 "Bob, you're too provoking. Sometimes I've no patience with you."

"And this is one of the times?" I laughed.

"Yes, it is. And the only way you can make amends is by coming next Thursday. Promise, now," she finished, coaxingly.

Mrs. Bronson is a good soul, so—I promised, and she forgave me. One of her most comfortable charms is that she forgives easily. A very time-saving quality, for most of us forgive sooner or later.

Whatever my other qualities, I am at least a man of my word, and Thursday afternoon, although one of those unseasonably hot days with which April sometimes afflicts us, found me arrayed in my frock coat and attendant paraphernalia, on my way to Mrs. Bronson's. I would have given a crisp five-dollar bill to have been back at my desk, but my inconvenient habit of keeping engagements ruled me with a rod of iron. As I walked up Fifth Avenue, I wondered how many otherwise sensible men were bent on some similar wild-goose chase—wild *swan*-chase, to be accurate—and I made up my mind that this was the last Thursday which should find me being led like a lamb to the slaughter.

I turned east at Fifty-third Street, and in a few minutes I was saying amiable nothings in reply to Mrs. Bronson, who, "arrayed like one of these," was giving me the most effusive of welcomes.

"So awfully, awfully good of you to come. I really didn't expect you, it is so warm. Still, the weather doesn't seem to have kept many away," and she smiled complacently as she glanced at the gabbling mob which filled, almost to overflowing, her pretty little drawing-room. (I always call it drawing-room—it pleases Mrs. Bronson, carries her back to the "marble halls" of her girlhood, and away from the little seven by nine apartment for which poor Bronson pays an exorbitant rent, just because it is below Fifty-ninth Street.)

I murmured a few fatuities and in-

anities as to my great joy at being there, none of which Mrs. Bronson believed. But one has to be polite. Then I looked around the room for the red-haired siren whom I had come to meet.

"Where is the swan?" I demanded.

"The *what*?" asked Mrs. Bronson, in astonishment.

"I—I beg your pardon," I stammered, almost embarrassed. "I mean your friend Miss Irving."

"But why did you call her swan?" she persisted.

"Really, Mrs. Bronson, I—I merely misspoke myself. But, tell me, tell me quickly, is she that thing over there with the dyed hair?"

"Bobby, if I didn't like you so much, I'd be downright angry with you. There are no *things* here. That woman over there is the coming *Juliet*." (I thought she'd be a long time coming, if appearances counted for anything, or if I were *Romeo*.) "But she is *not* Miss Irving. In fact, *she* isn't here yet. It is half after five now, and she said she would surely be here a little before five. I can't see what has detained her. But now that you are here, you *must* meet somebody," and like an unwilling little pup on the end of a leash, she dragged me over to a knot of people, and to my disgust presented me as "Mr. Fields, the man who makes or mars the fortunes of authors," and then inconsiderately left me.

That settled it. I knew I was in the midst of a crowd of literary aspirants, and I wished, temporarily, that my mother had had the sense to strangle me at my birth. It would have saved me such a stupendous amount of boredom; for of all the cants in this vale of tears, the cant of literature is the most exasperating. I stood it for fifteen minutes. The geese cackled incessantly. And just as I with murder in my heart was about to give up the ghost, Mrs. Bronson dawned on my horizon once more, and with a beckoning nod called me to her side, and saved me from an untimely grave.

"Bobby, I'm so sorry," she began, penitently.

"Well, you ought to be," I answered,

fiercely. "I'm almost reduced to a pulp. I have never in my life——"

"Oh," she said, comprehending, "I didn't mean that. I want to tell you that I have just received a note from Miss Irving, telling me that it will be impossible for her to be here this afternoon. She says," and Mrs. Bronson glanced at a note which she held in her hand, "nothing short of physical disability could keep me away from you this afternoon. But a dreadful headache has me in its clutches. I am sorry not to be able to meet your friends, especially Mr. and Mrs. Donaldson and Mr. Fields, of whom I have heard you speak so much and so fondly. Perhaps you will let me run in to see you to-morrow afternoon about five, when there is a possibility that you will be alone, or nearly so. May I come then, dear Mrs. Bronson?" and so forth and so on. Mrs. Donaldson telephoned me this morning that she and Don were going to Englewood for the day, which accounts for their not being here. I'm sorry to have dragged you here under false pretenses, Bobby," and the dear little woman was contrition incarnate. "It was so good of you to come."

"Oh, well, never mind, it's all in the day's work"—Mrs. Bronson's rescue of me from the cackling geese had so filled my heart with gratitude that there was no room for any other emotion. "Do you know, now that Miss Irving *hasn't* come, I almost want to meet her."

"Just the way with you men," she laughed, shaking her head disapprovingly, "it's always the peach just out of reach that is the most alluring. It's wonderful what a glamor *out-of-reach-ness* casts over things. Now, you didn't want to come here to-day."

"No," I admitted.

"And you didn't care a snap of your well-kept fingers about meeting Helen Irving?"

"Very true," I said.

"And now, just because she isn't here, you really admit, in a most condescending and patronizing way, that you almost want to meet her?"

"Leave out your two unpleasant adjectives, and I'll admit, not that I *almost*

want to meet her, but that I *really* want to meet her."

"Why?" she demanded.

"Well, perhaps because she insinuated in her note that she would like to see you when you were not surrounded by your satellites. I naturally thought that, like the rest, she simply wanted to be here to be among the other satellites. A good place to advertise oneself."

"Bobby, you're incorrigible."

"Well, you asked me," I said, defensively.

"Yes, I know," she admitted.

"And really, Mrs. Bronson, few of these people here would be capable of appreciating the charm of an hour spent alone with you."

"Now, Bobby, that's rather nice. I quite like it, even if it is a sort of reflection upon some of my friends. And, mercy me! that reminds me that I must go talk to some of them this very minute. Why, I'm the rudest woman in New York," and she started away from me.

"But Miss Irving?" I interposed, hastily.

"I tell you, come to-morrow afternoon at five."

"Thanks; that's what I've been waiting for. May I go home now?"

"Bobby, Bobby, you're——"

"Yes, yes, I know," I laughed. "Good-by, to-morrow at five," and, with a sigh of relief, I left the room. Each time I throw wisdom to the canines, and go to a "Thursday," or a "Monday," or a "Wednesday," I realize more fully than I did the time before, the trenchant truth of the dear old autocrat's characterization, "Giggle, gabble, gobble, and get." It is needless to add that I always "get," as early as the law allows.

The next afternoon when Helen Irving came into Mrs. Bronson's tiny library, where she and I sat gossiping—with Mrs. Bronson, conversation and gossip are synonymous—I thought she was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen in my life. And from the instant I beheld her, there was a haunting familiarity about her beauty which I could not understand.

She was of more than average height, with a figure which a goddess might have envied, and she carried herself like a princess—or as a princess *should*, and generally *doesn't*. The only princess that I have ever seen, walked like any other woman, only, possibly, a little worse. Her hair, of the most glorious shade of red, the red that is most beautiful when seen against deep crimson, waved in big sculpturesque waves, from a low, broad brow. Where, before, had I seen that marvelous red? Her skin was that absolute, and yet elusive, pink and white. And her eyes—well, I thought I *had* seen blue eyes before, but, until that day, I had only half guessed the depth of expression of which blue eyes are capable. They were “deeply, darkly, beautifully blue,” long eyes, and their gaze was most direct, most searching. The eyebrows, black and very slightly arched, almost straight, gave a strength to the face which perfectly rounded out and completed its singular beauty. The expression of the face was rather sad, but in the radiance of Helen Irving's smile one lost sight of the shade of sadness. I am sure that I looked my admiration, for Mrs. Bronson fairly beamed on me as she presented me.

“Mr. Fields was so disappointed at not meeting you yesterday afternoon.”

“More disappointed than I can tell you,” I said, which was perfectly true. Her beauty was taking hold of me.

“I was very sorry that I could not come.” I had half dreaded to hear her speak. I was afraid that her voice might break the charm of her beauty—her beauty, with its puzzling familiarity. But I need not have worried—her voice was as lovely as her face.

“I wanted to come so much; I was very anxious to meet you, Mr. Fields, and Mr. and Mrs. Donaldson. I had heard so much of you all. But you remember,” and she turned to Mrs. Bronson, “how many lovely trips those headaches spoiled for me during those good days in Florence. Those were happy, ideal days, were they not, Mrs. Bronson?” and she smiled radiantly.

“The happiest of your life?” I haz-

arded, rather impertinently, I must confess, considering I had just met Miss Irving.

“Oh, I can't quite say that, but so happy, so restful and peaceful, that I'd be willing to live them over again. That's saying a good deal, isn't it?”

I felt almost jealous of those half dozen men who, Mrs. Bronson had told me, had been ready to be Helen Irving's devoted slaves during those Florentine days.

“Are you going to be in town some time, Miss Irving?” I asked, anxious to leave Florence and the Florentines where they belonged, in the past.

“Indeed she is,” said Mrs. Bronson, quickly. “She is coming to visit us at Easthampton the last of June. You know you've promised, Helen.”

“I haven't forgotten, dear Mrs. Bronson, and I have no intention of breaking my promise. I am looking forward to that visit more than you can imagine. I have decided not to sail until the middle of July, so that I can have a little longer time with you.”

“You must run down, Bob, while Miss Irving is with us.”

“I am sure I should be delighted,” said I.

“Helen, you ought to get Mr. Fields to review your book,” broke in Mrs. Bronson, with apparent ingenuousness. Up to this point I had always thought her well-intentioned, disinterested, unmercenary.

“Oh, Mr. Fields would not condescend to read, much less to review, anything so trivial as my little book!”

Of course I swore that I should be only too glad to—*any* man would after such a look as I had just received from those deep, blue eyes. And again her haunting resemblance to some one struck me forcibly.

“Have I ever met you before, Miss Irving?” I asked, suddenly.

“I don't know. That's scarcely flattering, Mr. Fields. I'm sure that I have never met you. I shouldn't have to ask, if I had.”

I paid no attention to the thrust, although it was rather a severe one.

“There is something so puzzlingly

familiar about your face, that it seems as though I must have seen you somewhere," I persisted.

"One never can tell," she said, serenely; "we see many people abroad. But I haven't been in America since I was ten years old, and that's way back in the dark ages," she smiled.

"The funniest part of it is, Miss Irving, that when you smile, I don't seem to remember you at all, yet when your face is in repose I could swear that I had seen you somewhere."

"That is odd, isn't it?" But her tone was uninterested, not to say bored. "People are always seeing resemblances in me to some one. I begin to think that I must have a horribly common type of face."

I raised my hand protestingly.

"But come, let's not talk about me any longer. Let's talk about something interesting. Tell me, Mrs. Bronson, every single thing you have done since you left Florence."

I felt *de trop*. Besides, I had an engagement at the Calumet at six, and it is quite a walk from Fifty-third Street to Twenty-ninth.

"I know you women are just spoiling for a gossip. No, no, don't say you aren't. And I refuse to be a spoil-sport any longer. So glad to have met you, Miss Irving. Perhaps I'll think who you resemble by and by. Good-by, Mrs. Bronson; thank you for letting me come," and I pressed the little lady's hand affectionately. (You've simply got to like Mrs. Bronson. She makes you.) As she and I reached the door of the little library, I added, in an undertone:

"You were right. She is different from the others. She is the Swan."

"The *what*?" For the second time my allusion puzzled her.

"Oh, nothing—a mere foolishness. I mean, I like her."

"Do you *always* call people you like swans?"

"No; sometimes I call them *dear*, dear Mrs. Bronson." She laughed.

"But now, good-by; really, I must not keep you away from Miss Irving a minute longer."

"Bobby, just a second, if you really *must* go," and she laid a detaining hand on my arm; "I want you and Miss Irving to dine with us to-morrow night. You'll come, won't you, Helen?" she called out to Miss Irving, who was at the other end of the room.

"Come where, dear?"

"Here, to-morrow night, to dinner."

"Delighted."

"Just the Donaldsons and ourselves—anything the matter, Helen?" For a queer little cry had seemed to come to us from the corner of the room where Miss Irving was standing.

"Nothing of any consequence. I hurt my finger."

"Oh," said Mrs. Bronson, in a tone of relief. "As I started to say, Bobby," she went on, "Bronson will be home from Baltimore to-morrow, and we'll have a nice little family party."

I accepted at once, although I knew that it would take Fairfield at least a month to forgive me for breaking my engagement with him.

I walked briskly down Fifth Avenue to the Calumet, where Jackson and two or three other congenial spirits were waiting for me, and in the very good evening which followed a very good dinner, I promptly forgot all about Mrs. Bronson and the Swan. Nor did I think of them again, until Jackson and I reached our apartment that night, and my eyes fell full upon a Henner (the pet of my Lares and Penates), which hangs over the fireplace.

The inevitable Henner hair brought Miss Irving to my mind with a rush. Where *had* I seen that woman before? Surely there were lots of red-haired, blue-eyed women in the world. She was like the Henner woman, only, I was forced to admit, more subtly, more originally beautiful. It was not the almost ideal beauty of coloring and perfection of feature alone that made Miss Irving's face remarkable in its loveliness. The strength in the face was a striking element of its wonderful beauty. It provoked me so that I could not place her—for I pride myself on my memory of names and faces—that I think I must have sat for a full hour there before the

fireplace, racking my brain for the particular niche occupied by Helen Irving or by Helen Irving's double.

Jackson grew tired of trying to make me talk, and went to bed. I finally had to give up the quest, and tumbled into bed myself, just as a noisy clock, in an otherwise peaceful and blameless belfry, rang out the tiny hour of two.

I suppose I had been asleep two or three hours, when I awakened with a start—an unpleasant dream, in which the Henner woman over the fireplace and Helen Irving were most unaccountably mixed, had proved too much for my powers of slumber. I jumped out of bed, groped about for my antidote for sleepless hours, my cigarette, and turned on the light. As the glare fell full upon the picture over the fireplace, I started back, and nearly fell over my smoking-table in my astonishment, causing Jackson, in an adjoining room, to growl out a malediction upon people "who didn't know enough to let other people sleep."

It was all as clear as day. The Henner woman over the fireplace was *like* Helen Irving, it was true, but the picture of the red-haired woman, in the greswome black frame that hung in Donaldson's studio, and Helen Irving were one and the same woman! The picture of the woman whose history Donaldson, in a burst of confidence the night before his marriage to my ward, Rachel Malcolm, had told me, in all its hateful details. The picture in that frame, which was a mass of curious carving, in which tiny serpents and full-blown lotus flowers were strangely mingled.

Donaldson had never told me her name. But name or no name, I *knew* that that woman and Helen Irving were one and the same. I knew it absolutely. I would have staked my last farthing on it. I felt weak at the discovery, more shaken than I had been in many a long day. Small wonder there was that haunting familiarity! Small wonder, also, that it escaped me when Helen Irving smiled. For the face in the Donaldson picture, although gloriously beautiful, was a face on which tragedy,

yes, and sin, had set their seal. There was not even the shadow of a smile about the long, deep-blue eyes, nor did one so much as hover about the corners of the well-nigh perfect mouth.

I thought, shudderingly, of the black, hideous history of the woman—the woman who had been, yes, and who, in spite of everything, always would be the *only* woman to Donaldson. For, although Donaldson was not immoderately unhappy with little Rachel Malcolm, the woman in the picture was the one love of his life. And I felt that I would not stake a pin's price on his loyalty to Rachel, should Fate thrust Helen Irving into his way. Poor, credulous, little Mrs. Bronson! Mrs. Bronson, whose long suit was morality! And I smiled grimly as I thought of Mrs. Bronson and her Swan.

I pondered the whole matter over carefully for three long hours. Clearly, there was but one thing for me to do. And at ten o'clock that morning I proceeded to do it.

I was told, at her hotel, that Miss Irving was breakfasting, but would see me very shortly. She was lovelier even than she had been yesterday, when she came into the room. She tried not to act surprised to see me, and succeeded moderately well. I felt like a fool, and was filled with an ever-increasing hatred of my errand.

Incidentally, her beauty was getting hold of me, and that made my task the more difficult. For the hardest thing in the world for me to be, is disagreeable—to a pretty woman. I find it less difficult when the woman happens to be plain. For the first time in my recollection, I fell back upon the weather, and then, because I knew that I could not do it if I waited much longer, began my onslaught.

"Miss Irving," I said, abruptly, "I have found out whom you resemble."

"Yes?" she smiled, imperturbably, "and you have come here at ten o'clock in the morning to tell me so? Really, I am flattered at your interest."

"You won't go to Mrs. Bronson's dinner to-night, will you, Miss Irving?"

"Not go to Mrs. Bronson's? Why—

why, really, Mr. Fields, what on earth do you mean?"

"I simply repeat, you won't go, will you?"

"Why, certainly, I shall go, Mr. Fields! Not go, when Mrs. Bronson particularly asked you to come to meet me? Why, Mr. Fields!" And Miss Irving looked at me reproachfully. I was making no headway. I was becoming more of a fool by the minute, and I heartily wished Donaldson, Rachel, and Mrs. Bronson at the bottom of the Hudson River. I was not fond of the rôle of savior, but I had undertaken it voluntarily, and I must carry it through.

I plunged in boldly.

"Do you think Donaldson will want to see you?" I asked, sternly.

The color left her face for an instant. She recovered herself at once, and laughed.

"I don't know Donaldson, so I can't quite see why he *shouldn't* want to see me. Mr. Fields," and she arose, throwing her head back haughtily, "you will excuse me if I say that you act and talk like a crazy man."

"Miss Irving," and I thought of little Rachel, my dead friend's daughter, and resolved that the poor child should be saved, "you *lie* when you say that you don't know Donaldson—you know that you know him, and I know that you know him. I know the whole story, the whole, shameful, pitiable story. I know that you practically ruined his life once, and, by God, you shan't do it again. At least, not as long as the power of speech is still with me. Heaven knows that I have never been a talebearer, nor a scandal-monger, but if you persist in your determination to go to Mrs. Bronson's to-night, I shall go to her this afternoon, and shall tell her, in all its unpleasant details, what I know of her friend, Miss Irving."

"And if I don't go?" Her voice sank to a whisper—her whole person seemed shrunken, she staggered, and would have fallen had I not caught hold of her quickly and put her in a chair. "What if I don't go?" she whispered again.

"There is a boat for Genoa this after-

noon," I said, in as businesslike a tone as I could muster, "I think you could manage to be called to Italy suddenly——"

"And, Allen"—her breath came in short, quick gasps, but I knew that she would not cry. She was not that type of woman. "Mr. Fields, is *your* life blameless? Is there no sin at *your* door?"

I turned toward the window. I dis-like catechism of any sort.

"Perhaps you would not be so hard on me if you could know what it is to hunger and yearn for one person day in and day out, night in and night out. To love some one with a love so great that separation is misery, torturing, agonizing misery. To say every morning, I will not. To say every night—I must. I have fought this way with myself for two years. When I left him—I left him because I could not bear to have him work, and struggle, and almost starve himself for me. I felt that I was a drag upon him—that his work, that everything suffered because I was with him. It was only for his sake that I regretted what I had been. And then I thought, what's the use, anyway? He never could have married me. The past forbade that. The year after I left him, I lived in luxury; and every night I cried myself to sleep, always with the thought of Allen, Allen, Allen! For he was the only good man I had ever known. And every morning I said to myself that I would break away from it all. And the longer I waited, the harder it became. Then, two years ago, I left it all—I disappeared utterly. I went to Florence and taught English to a few little Florentines. I made just enough money to keep body and soul together. Nobody knew who I was—Helen Irving meant nothing to the few people whom I met. It really meant nothing to me, for I had left the old name with the old life. Then, one day, I met Mrs. Bronson, the dearest, best of women. I think she liked me. She was so good to me. She told me of her friends. One day she spoke of Allen Donaldson—then she spoke of his wife—I remember how the ground seemed to be slipping

from under me when she spoke of his wife. What was the use of anything, anyway? The Donaldsons were friends of hers. She wished I would come to New York sometime—she would like to have me meet her friends. I came to New York—I came because I hoped that I might at least see Allen. I have prayed night and morning, ever since I have been here, that I might meet him, speak to him. But I have not thrust myself upon him—I have not communicated with him in any way. Yesterday, when I heard Mrs. Bronson say that he would be one of the party to-night, I was so afraid that I would shout aloud in my joy, that I dug my nails into my flesh until I cried out in pain. Perhaps you remember that I said I had hurt my finger." I remembered. "I want to see Allen," Miss Irving went on, wildly, "see him, see him, see him! I want to tell him that I am not what I once was. I want him to know that I love him, that I always have loved him, that I always shall love him. And I tell you, frankly, Mr. Fields," and she looked me in the eye fearlessly, "that if I should see him, and he should say to me 'Come,' I would follow him gladly to the ends of the earth. In a way, I am almost ready to thank you for what you have done. I think I am proving my love for him. I will go away this afternoon."

"The *Italia* sails at five," I suggested, and I felt as though I were condemning some one to death.

"Very well," she said, quietly, "I will take it. Will you attend to everything for me?"

I bowed in assent.

"And you will tell Mrs. Bronson—oh, well," and she closed her eyes wearily, "tell her anything you like except the truth. She was always good to me. And Allen," her voice broke a little, "if you ever see Allen, tell him everything I have told you, every word. Promise me."

I promised.

"And now, good-by, Mr. Fields," she said, extending her hand.

"Good-by, Miss Irving." I am not in the habit of bestowing benedictions, but

I said, "God bless you," as I stooped over and kissed her hand. She was worth Rachel, and Allen, and Mrs. Bronson, put together.

"Well," said Mrs. Bronson, to me that evening, as I sauntered into her little library five minutes before dinner time, "thank goodness, you are still with us."

"Amen," I responded; "but why, particularly?"

"Such a chapter of accidents and disappointments," and Mrs. Bronson's bright eyes filled with tears. "In the first place, Bronson came back from Baltimore with a sick headache, and has gone to bed."

"What a shame!" I murmured, politely and sympathetically, but with inward thanksgiving, for Bronson aggravates me almost beyond endurance.

"Then," Mrs. Bronson continued, "I had a telegram from Miss Irving late this afternoon, saying that she was suddenly called to Genoa by the death of a friend (you know we met Miss Irving in Italy), and was sailing on the *Italia* at five to-day. She sent good-by to you."

"Well, of all disappointing things!" I said, with great emphasis.

"Yes, I'm afraid you and Helen are fated never to know one another any better."

"So it seems," I sighed, "and she is so beautiful. I'm half in love with her already. Well, I trust nothing has happened to the Donaldsons," I said, hopefully.

"I said a chapter of accidents, didn't I?" said Mrs. Bronson. "Mrs. Donaldson telephoned me at two o'clock that Allen had been called to Italy very suddenly. Some relative of his, whom she had never heard of before, was dying, and had sent for him. He sailed to-day on the *Italia*."

"Damn," I said, savagely, under my breath. And I thought of my miserably wasted morning.

"What did you say?" queried Mrs. Bronson.

"Too bad," I answered, laconically, if not truthfully.

"Mrs. Donaldson seemed quite

broken up about it, but she said that, of course, Allen had to go. Poor little thing, she'll be awfully lonely without Allen. She's such a child! We must be good to her, Bobby."

"We certainly must," I said, more warmly than the case apparently demanded.

"Wouldn't it be funny," said Mrs. Bronson, suddenly, "if he and Helen should meet going over?"

"Very funny," I answered, laughing grimly. Fate is a tricky jade, after all.

"Funny, funny," I repeated, still laughing, as the tragic humor of the whole affair swept over me.

"I always wanted them to meet—I knew they would be congenial. Even more so, I think, than you and Helen." I thought of Helen in that one instant of supreme self-sacrifice, and inwardly said "No." "But now," Mrs. Bronson resumed, musingly, "Fate has taken it all right out of my hands."

"Fate certainly has," I echoed. And I remembered Helen's words, "If he should say to me 'Come,' I would follow him gladly to the ends of the earth." Clearly the command had not been wanting.

Then Mrs. Bronson and I went in to dinner.



SPRING IN THE CITY

THE city feels like spring to-day;
The tall roofs smoke beneath the heat,—
But, O, the blue hills far away!

The curtains from wide windows sway,
The square has not an empty seat;
The city feels like spring to-day!

The clean-swept avenue is gay
With flimsier gown and lighter feet,—
But, O, the blue hills far away!

The children round the hydrants play,
The flower-boy's cry floats down the street;
The city feels like spring to-day!

I hear some lone hand-organ's lay,
Far-off, and thin, and strangely sweet,—
But, O, the blue hills far away!

I let my dreaming footsteps stray
Where dusty kerb and river meet;
The city feels like spring to-day!
But, O, the blue hills far away!

JOHN ARBUTHNOTT.

THE FINISH OF A DEVOTEE

By Beatrice Hanscom

"OPHELIA is coming to make us that week's visit she's been promising," said Madeleine, delightedly, looking up from the note she had been reading.

I would have wagered that note was from Ophelia, because, even across the breakfast table, it was plain to be seen that at least one word in every line was underscored from two to five times.

"Good!" I said, heartily. I liked Ophelia.

Ophelia is Madeleine's younger sister, and in the days when I was industriously besieging the fortress of Madeleine's heart, I had regarded Ophelia, in her brief holidays from boarding school, as a genial imp, sandwiched between a box of Huyler's and a callow youth.

But when she had visited us the winter before, she struck me as a charming young person.

In the first place, she was good to look at; tall and slender, graceful and dainty, and brimming over with enthusiasm.

Then, I liked the way she dressed: always shipshape and taut on the street, and fluffy and frilly in the house.

But, most of all, she had won my heart by her interest in my collection.

For I have a hobby for porcelains and potteries, and my small collection is the apple of my eye.

Most of my friends regard it with amused tolerance or calm indifference, but Ophelia, although she brought to the subject only an unbroken ignorance, went into raptures over each and every specimen.

That she was equally enthusiastic over Madeleine's Angora kitten seemed just a pretty, girlish whim.

The disproportionateness of feminine rapture has always been rather captivating to me.

Madeleine, of course, rejoiced in my idols, as a good and loving wife should; but, dearly as I love Madeleine, she is just my finer, better self, and the actual interest of an outsider was a pleasing thing.

"She is coming," announced Madeleine, after wrestling with a crisscross postscript till an absurd little frown topped off her nose like an interrogation point, "in time for dinner to-night."

I decided to re-arrange my cabinet before I went downtown.

"Here's another postscript," said Madeleine, with a shade less enthusiasm. "'I'm playing a lot of whist. Hope you know some good players?' Billy," she gasped, "we don't know one!"

"Don't be so horror-stricken," I said, amiably. "I used to play a bit myself. Dare say I could get it up again. Second hand low, third high, and there you are. Come and help me with the cabinet, won't you?"

I was glad I had two new pieces to show Ophelia, and I think I loved them all the more because my penchant for prowling around antiquity shops always necessarily resulted in some small domestic economies.

The *rose Du Barry* cup, broken, to be sure, and very clumsily mended—but undoubtedly genuine, thank Heaven!—was the direct cause of my wearing my last winter's overcoat.

The other addition to my treasures was a bit of Dutch pottery, old enough and ugly enough to have been fashioned, as I dared to hope it was, by

those same Dutch potters who went to Dresden to aid Böttger in the good old days of Augustus the Strong.

Madeleine had really insisted on my buying this, and had cheerfully sworn all thought of a new hat.

Instead, she had done something marvelous to her last winter's one—turned it, I believe—so that it was revitalized into quite the prettiest one I had ever seen, at least, when Madeleine had it on.

When we had put the Dutch plate by a piece of old Meissen, whose swords crossed at an angle which proclaimed the exact period of its manufacture, and when we had established the Sèvres on friendly relations with the Spode teapot which Madeleine's aunt had sent us the Christmas before, we drifted into a long conversation apropos of the exact time when I first began to hope that Madeleine regarded me favorably. We still have an absurd habit of doing that kind of thing, and I was late in getting downtown in consequence.

Going down on the elevated, I met Bob Trowbridge, and told him Ophelia would arrive that night in time for dinner.

Bob is one of the best fellows in the world, with an income he cannot spend, and he has had a habit, for the last year, of dropping in at the house whenever he has had a leisure evening.

He has a big steam yacht, a French automobile, and some Kentucky thoroughbreds. He takes great interest in his kennels, and likes all kinds of out-of-door sports; but he knows absolutely nothing on the subject of potteries, and I never knew him to take the slightest interest in them. So I was rather surprised when he came in the office that same afternoon, and presented me with a Delft rum jug, which, he said, carelessly, he'd happened to pick up, and thought I might like.

I was the more surprised, because I had seen that identical jug for months in Van Antler's window, and knew, in spite of the inordinate price that Van Antler asked for it, that it was only a good reproduction of an old design.

However, I couldn't hurt Bob's feel-

ings, and I was really touched by his doing such a thing; so I took it with apparent pleasure, and thought I could devise some means later for removing it from my collection.

I asked Bob to come up and spend the evening with us, but it struck me that he seemed a bit confused, and he mumbled something about coming, if possible. But he's such a popular chap, and has so many engagements, that I thought very little about it.

Ophelia was dressing for dinner when I got home, and Madeleine was in one of her enigmatical moods when I showed her the jug, and she gurgled with laughter when I told her about it, and that I'd asked Bob up for the evening, but hardly thought he could come.

But I had long since abandoned all idea of accounting for Madeleine's moods, being content with the fact that she was thoroughly adorable in all of them.

When Ophelia came down to dinner she greeted me warmly, and I thought her prettier than ever in her pale-blue gown, with a big bunch of violets, tied with a purple cord; but I couldn't understand why she wore a row of plain, little, round pins, with various combinations of letters stamped on them. It suggested those cards which stationers send out to enable you to select a monogram die.

"I'm really not so much surprised, Ophelia," I said, after due deliberation, "that you have joined the League of American Wheelmen, but the Christian Endeavor is a new light on your character, and I can't imagine what T. S. and those others stand for."

"Why, Billy, these are my *whist* pins," Ophelia enlightened me, with much the air of one announcing the Victoria Cross. "American Whist League, Expert's Club, top score, and my team and pair pins."

"Don't you mean coach and pair?" I ventured, but she ignored it. "We play all the while at home now," she said, enthusiastically. "It's the most *exciting* thing in the world! They've promised to telegraph me about all their games while I'm here. Do you know Mackin-

tosh? I want tremendously to meet him. You know he has held the Nottingham trophy for three years."

"I shouldn't have said it was *three* years," I began, mendaciously, but Madeleine's gurgling laugh betrayed me.

"There is a Riley Mackintosh," I went on, rather meekly, "who has the next office to mine. You can't mean him. Little, dried-up man—awful bore—insurance office."

"I do not know about his personal appearance," said Ophelia, with a touch of dignity, "but Riley Mackintosh *invented* the blue echo. He is *great*. I think," she added, as if it was of no consequence, "that he *is* in an insurance office when he isn't playing whist."

"He's a devotee of the game, all right, then," I answered, cheerfully, "for he doesn't come to his office often enough to encourage his boy to keep it dusted."

"You must ask him up to-morrow night to play with Ophelia," interposed Madeleine.

"He might not want to *play* with me," said Ophelia, with a most unaccustomed meekness, "but it would be a wonderful opportunity for me to *meet* him."

"If that little snipe didn't want to play with you I'd thrash him," I said, savagely. "Great heavens, what do you think the man is made of?"

But just then the bell rang, and Bob Trowbridge came in.

"No idea I'd find you still at dinner," he said, embarrassedly. "My watch must be fast."

"Thought that watch of yours never varied a second, old man," I said, amiably, and I was honestly surprised at the look Madeleine sent me.

"You're just in time to have some coffee with us," she said to him, in her coziest and most friendly manner.

"It was nice of you not to forget my fondness for violets, Mr. Trowbridge," this from Ophelia.

Madeleine looked at me before I had a chance to speak this time, which was lucky; for a great light dawned on me, and in consequence I stayed out of the

conversation for several minutes, till I got my bearings. In the meantime, Trowbridge had secured them both for luncheon at some country club the next day, and had arranged to call for them in his automobile.

"And what about a little box party at night? There are some good things at the theatres now. Would you be too tired of me?" he asked, with a mock anxiety, which was half real.

"Billy has promised to ask Mr. Mackintosh to play whist here to-morrow night," Ophelia said, firmly.

Bob looked blank.

"Who's Mackintosh?" he asked.

"Robert, I am surprised at you," I said, severely. "Can it be that you do not use the blue echo? You're no housekeeper."

"Do you always use it, Billy?" This was Madeleine to the rescue.

"There are occasions when I do not," I said, with perfect truthfulness, and I ventured a tentative smile at Ophelia.

"Such as your opponent's lead," she smiled back.

I nodded. It seemed the safest thing to do. For some occult reason, my stock went suddenly to par on Ophelia's bourse.

"You and I will play these people a game now," she said, beaming on me. "I brought my boards. I'll go and get them."

She ran upstairs, and we went into the den. Bob looked thoroughly dejected.

"I'm an awful duffer at cards, Mrs. Adams," he said, ruefully. "Haven't played whist since I was a little shaver, and had to play to help amuse my grandfather when he had the gout. The old gentleman always gave me two shillings to play, and then made me put it up as a stake, and got it back again. I used to think him an awful screw. What do you do with boards?" he asked me, suddenly.

I had been wondering myself, but I avoided Madeleine's eye.

"Just another name for cards," I said, airily. "Boards—pasteboards—a mere localism."

As it turned out, it was a pity I said

this so quickly, for Ophelia came in just then, with her arms full of square, black boards, each containing a pack of cards.

It seemed a good time to create a diversion.

"Do you see how well your rum jug looks in the cabinet?" I asked Bob. "Ophelia, I've three new treasures to show you. What do you think of the one next the Spode teapot?"

"Speaking of Spode, reminds me," said Ophelia, dramatically, holding one of the boards lovingly in her hands, and not even glancing at the cabinet. "Spades were trumps the other night. My partner held king, knave, and ace was turned to his left. I led low, and he put on the king."

Her tone suggested a tragedy. "Dear, dear," I murmured diplomatically.

"We'll have clubs for trumps," she went on, settling into her chair in a businesslike way, and fishing her cards deftly out of their compartment. "I hope you're not a short-suiter?"

"No, indeed," I assured her, but I was beginning to be a bit uncomfortable. That pile of boards looked so formidable, and Ophelia had such an air of responsibility.

It is impossible for me to tell just what was the matter with that game. Ophelia reproached me on successive hands with (1) forcing her when she discarded an eight, (2) playing a false card—they were all playing me false—(3) not returning her trump lead, (4) holding up a master card. This last turned out to be a miserable ace, that had been unprincipled enough to slip behind another card, and which, in consequence, I never saw until late in the game.

But on the fifth board, when Bob said, reflectively, "Let's see, do you have to follow suit?" she really turned pale.

"Do you know, my good people," she said, with a smile that seemed to contain some heroic elements, "I believe I've too bad a headache to duplicate even these boards to-night. If you'll excuse me, I think I'd better go and see if I can't sleep it off."

We sat like criminals until we heard

her door close. Then Madeleine came around the table, and put a comforting hand on our disconsolate shoulders.

"Cheer up," she said gayly. "What difference does it make if you can't recognize a master card, and Bob *doesn't* follow suit, and I haven't the ghost of an idea what the blue echo is! Each to his taste! Whist is not mine. Neither could I pick out a horse for Bob, nor you an automobile; neither of you could trim a hat; and Ophelia falls by the wayside on the subject of potteries—occasionally, at least."

"She thinks,

The mark is but the maker's stamp,
A cup's a cup for a' that,"

I murmured bitterly, and pride in my own sarcasm made me feel better.

"What you both need," said Madeleine, impressively, "is a good cigar and a Scotch high-ball; and you'd better have it in the dining-room, where you can't see this funeral pyre."

And Madeleine, as usual, was right.

The ensuing week was the most depressing one I have ever spent. Ophelia refused to make any evening engagements until I had seen Mackintosh, and I haunted his office until the dejected office boy began to regard me as a possible applicant for a policy.

When I finally found him, he said he couldn't give an evening to one-table play, but he invited Ophelia to be his pair partner on Saturday night at the Sarah Battle Club; an invitation which Ophelia accepted with a pious joy, such as she might have shown had Peter invited her inside the heavenly gates.

In the meantime, she decided, she ought to play a practice game every night. So Madeleine, by a lavish use of the telephone, and her best note paper, managed to secure among our casual acquaintances a series of super-intelligent people, to whom the blue echo and the rotary discard were mere child's play.

The florist's wagon stopped regularly every morning with violets, and Bob appeared just as regularly a little later to take Ophelia and Madeleine for a spin or to some club for lunch.

He presented Ophelia with a dachshund, which he taught surreptitiously to growl whenever he saw a whist board; but that intelligent animal went too far in his desire to please, and chewed one up, which caused Ophelia to banish him to the kitchen for a season.

But during this brief time of levity I was at the office, and every night after dinner Madeleine and I were exiled to the second story, for the lower floor had to be kept in a funereal hush, so as not to disturb the rigor of the game.

A wan-eyed Ophelia came to breakfast every morning, and told us the tale of various delinquencies of the night before.

Talk of the English taking their pleasures sadly!

The great night finally came, and Bob and I drove down to the club with Ophelia, and arranged to call for her at eleven.

She sat rapt and silent all the way, with her hands clasped in her lap, and so entirely "a thing apart" that we could do no less than respect her mood; and she swept up the steps to the club with the exalted expression of a young nun taking her vows.

Mackintosh met us at the door, and the necessary introductions took place.

"I'm glad you are on time," we heard him say, as we turned away. "The club rules are very rigid."

"Conceited ass!" said Bob, vindictively.

When we opened the club door again, precisely at eleven, we found a haggard Ophelia, already swathed in her wraps and waiting for us. Mackintosh delivered her into our hands with the air of a judge who has just pronounced a life sentence. She was trembling when I put her in the carriage, and her first words came with a sob.

"I can't talk about it—it's too awful!"

"Great heavens, Ophelia! What's the matter?" I asked, in honest alarm.

"I *revoked!*" she moaned, "on the very first hand, and he just put his head on the table and *groaned!* After that, I played any way."

I am ashamed to confess that the

friendly darkness hid a grin on my face, but Bob swung himself over to the back seat, and took her in his arms, as though she had been a child.

"Don't you dare to cry, my darling," he said, "or I'll go back and break his confounded neck. Give it up, all this fuss and worry. Heavens, I can make you happier than that! What you need is to be taken care of, dear, and I could do it so well. Marry me, and we'll go for a nice long cruise on the yacht. You shall have lots of pretty yachting togs—sunshine and salt air—and love, sweetheart"—the big voice shook—"love most of all."

I held my breath until I began to grow purple in the face. Then I heard Ophelia give a contented little sigh.

"Bob, you're very restful!" she said.

"Billy," remarked that energetic young man, "you'll find a fine view from that farther window."

But, as I obediently turned my head, I heard that soft sound and silence that made my own lover-heart go tugging away at its strings.

I coughed discreetly.

"As the young person's chaperon," I began, meekly, but Bob stretched out a big, brown hand for one of mine, and Ophelia put out a small, white one for the other, and so, like happy children, we drove home.

Madeleine and the dachshund came out into the hall to meet us.

"How was the game?" she inquired, genially.

"The *game?*" stammered Ophelia.

"I suppose there was a game," said Madeleine, with a touch of dignity.

"Oh, the *whist?*" said Ophelia, lightly. "I lost." And she went serenely into the den.

"And I won, Mrs. Adams," laughed Bob, triumphantly, grasping Madeleine's hands in his.

Then he, too, went into the den, and the socially untrained dachshund followed him.

Madeleine and I sat on the stairs, and talked it over for a discreet interval; and when we finally went in, Ophelia was seated in the biggest armchair in front of the grate fire.

The dachshund lay at her feet, with one paw on her skirt, and Bob, flushed and exultant, was just adding to the cheerful blaze the last of the whist boards.

"Speaking of hearts, reminds me," I said, "that I shall have to give you two young people a wedding present one of these days. Ophelia, you shall choose from my collection the one thing you prefer."

She hesitated, and I confess I suffered a horrid pang. Suppose it didn't work

—suppose she should choose the *rose Du Barry*.

"If I can have the one I truly want," she said, slowly, "I think I'd rather have the rum jug, because Bob gave it to you."

"You shall have it," said I, with due solemnity. "In fact, it is what I myself should have chosen for you."

I took it out of the cabinet, and laid it on her lap.

"Queer thing to start housekeeping with—empty," laughed Bob.



ON SAMAR BEACH

ON Samar beach, when sun was high
And palm leaves beat the windy sky,
I loafed, to watch brown hands that plied
The native loom, where, shining wide,
The silky silver held my eye.

She called it—well, I wouldn't try
To say the name as she did; I
Could only think of you, and see
You, dimpling and sparkling buoyantly
In blue and silver, like the tide
On Samar beach.

And, if I leaned against an arm
Like living bronze, or touched a warm
Soft mouth, I closed my eyes and drew
My breath sharp, dreaming it was you
Instead of Sifa, by the palm.

Wherefore I send the silky blue,
Cost of a word, a kiss or two—
Across a continent and sea
To one who makes a fool of me,
To please her for an evening through.

Sweetheart, accept these verses few,
Accept the situation, too.
(Stone broke—it's damnably slow!)
But still I can't wade home, you know!
And somehow life must be got through
On Samar beach!

LUCIA CHAMBERLAIN.

THE BLOOD OF HIS ANCESTORS

By Henry C. Rowland

MISS ELINOR TOWNSEND regarded her *vis-à-vis* with a dubious displeasure.

"If you really *must* have something concrete, Eric, we will say that it is because you lack force. The man whom I marry must be a positive entity, and his thoughts and ideas and general behavior be innate; he must not absorb them from the medium around him as a jellyfish absorbs floating particles from the water. Such an individual is rare, I admit, but they do exist and when I find one——"

"He will probably be already married," interrupted the man, lazily. "It needs adversity to bring out character, Elinor. You are asking too much of the human male protoplasm in the plastic stage. I suppose it's a natural sequence of your four-year attack of collegiate educationitis. Before you went to Wellesley you used to be fond of flowers; you are still, but your fondness doesn't keep you from pulling them to pieces petal by petal and criticising the way they're put together."

A flush crept into the girl's cheek, and resting her elbow on the coaming, she dropped her chin in her hand and gazed thoughtfully at the man who was sprawled gracefully across the stern sheet of the boat, playing idly with the inert tiller.

Over their heads the boat's tall single sail fluttered soothingly as the long swell gently swayed the tapering mast and a lazy creak droned intermittently from the chafing of the jaws of the gaff. About them lay a summer haze that had almost blotted out the shore astern, and the weight of the humid air seemed trying to resist their efforts to breathe.

Both felt the oppression, but despite their higher educations neither was sufficiently versed in the elementary teaching of the sea to read its true significance. Striking back at the irritation, the cause of which she could not locate, the girl renewed the discussion.

"The trouble is, Eric, you are so indeterminate; you have no definite outline of your own, like——"

"The jellyfish," supplied the man, sadly. "I know it, Elinor. At college they used to say that I was cursed with good-nature——"

"It isn't good-nature as much as it is a sort of apathy. Men jostle you on the street and servants treat you slightly; why, even the waiters never bother to thank you for a tip——"

"But they usually serve me pretty well——"

"That's because you look as if you were accustomed to having the best of everything, and they serve you well from professional pride! No!—the trouble lies in your indifference—or indecision, I have never been quite able to decide which it is." She paused and looked at him with the anger which one usually feels toward a person on whose account one has behaved ungracefully.

The man smiled back at her cheerfully. While his qualities may have left much to be desired, there was certainly no outward and visible sign of their lack. He was fair, broad in the upper part of his back, and he wore a smile as he wore the loose-fitting coat which concealed the latent power underneath. The usual languor of his movements was almost as deceptive as the smile that always played about his eyes.

"You were thirty-five years old last month," the girl proceeded, with an effort to justify the pique which the man had taken unprotestingly, "and what have you ever accomplished?"

"It was all accomplished for me!" drawled the man, sadly. "There doesn't seem to be any breeze—suppose I go down and fire up and make you some tea."

The girl regarded him for a moment with hopeless disapproval; then shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"Very well," resignedly, "you are at least consistent. No breeze—no progress—no getting on—therefore, *tea!*"

The man swung himself into the cockpit with an easy undulation that masked the strength and muscular coordination of his motion.

"I am also philosophic. I can't make the breeze—but I *can* make tea."

He dropped into the cabin, and the girl picked up a book that was lying on the thwart. For a while she turned the pages, and then, laying down the book, gazed at the misty horizon ahead, which was suspiciously near. Light tinklings and a cheerful whistle marked the preparations going on below. Slowly the shadows grew undefined, and a sense of imperceptible gloom and oppression caused her suddenly to look up and around her.

"Eric!" she called, "come up! It looks so queerly!"

A yellow head emerged through the hatch and the man cast a quick glance about them. A flat, oily stagnation lay on the face of the ocean, and the sunlight had grown sick and weakly. Far astern, the sand cliffs of Cape Cod were enshrouded in a gloomy haze that darkened as they watched. A low rumble, rather felt than heard, seemed to grow up out of the sea, and suddenly a crooked flash gleamed through the mist and outlined the edges of heavy cloud banks over the Highland light.

"We're going to catch a thunderstorm, I'm afraid," said Eric, quietly. "Don't be alarmed, Elinor. I'll snug her down."

The big sail was quickly lowered and reefed to its smallest dimensions. Be-

fore this work was finished there had fallen a darkness almost of night, through which constant lightning flashed and the heavy reverberations were continuous. The man's cheerful whistle as he worked seemed weakly blasphemous, but his blue eyes had grown brightly alert.

"Don't be frightened, dear," he said, reassuringly, "I have driven the old girl through thunderstorms galore!"

She turned to him a face as pallid as the eerie light on the white scrap of sail.

"I can't help being frightened, Eric. There is fright in the air you breathe just before a storm like this—but I'm not going to be foolish! I'll do just as you tell me."

"That's the talk. Now to start with, go down below and slip off that skirt and climb into those oilers and a sou'-wester. I'll rig out when you come up."

She obeyed without a word, and a few minutes later emerged fully equipped for the coming conflict. The man was but an instant in preparing for the fray, and together they watched the wild transformation that was going on about them.

The somberness above the shore grew black, and suddenly a great yellow cloud of sand and dust was whirled, gyrating, high in air. A white, tossing line became apparent on the sea astern; then suddenly the shore was completely blotted out. A hot puff—then another struck their faces and the air was suddenly sweet with the odor of cedars and growing things upon the land. Quickly the man dropped the fragment of sail and threw some stops about it.

"We'll take this with a bare pole," he called, cheerfully, over his shoulder.

A quicker and colder puff struck the catboat and the rush of wind roared over their heads. The next instant it seemed as if a giant hand had crushed them down into the sea. The surface of the water was lifted in layer after layer, and with an appalling clamor the squall broke upon them in all its fury. The weight of wind upon the bare mast listed the heavy boat until the leeward deck was awash and the flying water

gave the impression that she was being swallowed up. The next instant she was off before it, tearing along with the driving spray.

Then a catastrophe occurred. A wedge of the wind forced itself into the bight of the ill-secured sail, and with a roar it burst from the gaskets and leaped upward in a great bellying balloon. Before there was time to let go the sheet the boat seemed carried bodily into the air and then plunged forward, burying her bows to the foot of the mast. A crashing, rending, tearing report that was mingled with the crash of the thunder followed, and mast and sail were torn away bodily, leaving a short, jagged stump. The lightened boat struggled upward.

"All right!" shouted the man to the terrified girl. "She'll be easy now as soon as she swings. That wreckage will hold her head on!"

"But what can we do?" she called in his ear. "How can we sail back—"

"I can rig up something when this blows out. No danger now!"

His wet, flashing smile gave the lie to the chaos about, and the girl became suddenly content. The boat had swung head on to the wind and, held by the accidental sea-anchor, became quiet. The man pointed to the cabin and the girl went below, where he followed her as soon as he had satisfied himself that all was as secure as might be.

A pale face and a pair of large, frightened eyes met his as he entered the cabin.

"Look," said the girl, faintly, and pointed downward. The short, quick motion of the boat was swashing an inch of water over the flooring.

The man quickly turned his back to the girl as he glanced down at his feet. He knew that none of the flying spindrift had entered the cabin, and the cockpit was scuppered.

"Elinor," he said, quietly. "When our mast carried away it must have started a leak. I will try to find it, and in the meantime take this bucket and bail into the cockpit!"

The girl's eyes bravely met his. "Suppose you can't, Eric?"

"Then, my dear, we will have to bail quite steadily until this squall blows out and I can rig a sail to take us in, but we will undoubtedly fall in with something before many hours. Everything going up and down the coast rounds Cape Cod."

He got up one of the floor planks, and both experienced a secret shock at the depth of black, washing water under their feet, which made any location of the leak impossible. For a while Eric made pretense of an investigation which he knew to be useless, and allowed the girl to bail, as he felt that fatigue was better than inert contemplation of their danger. The effect of the bailing was inappreciable.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the squall had broken and by nightfall the sky had cleared, but the wind had settled into a hard, steady blow from the westward. The sun set on a frothing, tossing waste of waters, and before it grew dark the Highland light was blinking coldly against the windy sky. Eric had encouraged Elinor to bail as he wished her to grow tired enough to sleep through the arduous night before them, for with any relaxation of their efforts the ripples ran deeper and deeper at every heavy roll.

Soon the darkness came, and Eric rigged a light from an oar lashed to the stump of the mast. When he went below he took the bucket from Elinor's hands, and the smile of weary hopelessness she gave him was like a knife through his heart, but he smiled back encouragingly.

"Now, oh queen, if you will graciously transfer your attentions to that starboard locker, we will regale our weary frames with sardines and deviled ham, and our souls with pleasant converse, these rhythmic motions which I am performing being entirely automatic and without—"

It was tactfully intended, but circumstances, if sufficiently potent, will triumph over tact. Pride prevented the outburst of tears which would have been Nature's way of easing the strain, and the higher education, which was, however, not sufficiently high to be above an

effort to improve upon Nature, diverted the emotion into anger.

"How do you dare," she cried, "to sit there and make a joke of a situation like this! You lie about indolently until the squall comes up, then smile and say it is all right when the mast is blown away, and now when the boat is leaking so fearfully that if we stop bailing we will sink, you joke about it. Haven't you any spirit or—or——"

Nature triumphed at this point and the girl burst into a storm of tears.

The man stopped his bailing long enough to go to the locker and get out some food which, under his quiet insistence, the girl finally consented to eat; then he went to the other locker where there was a bottle of whiskey and on an upper shelf a little box of medicines such as are provided for small cruising boats. Behind the shelter of his broad shoulders he tipped into the glass a little white heap of powder from a bottle marked "Trional." He filled the bottom of the glass with the whiskey and allowed it to stand. This done he resumed his bailing.

In sorrow and dejection the girl had finished a slight but much needed supper. She interrupted the man who was conversing genially upon their absolute certainty to be picked up on the following day.

"Will you forgive me for what I just said, Eric?"

He looked tenderly at the tired, tear-stained but beautiful face.

"On one condition," he answered, briskly, "that you drink a little whiskey and water and take a nap."

"Why the whiskey and water?" she asked.

"Because you will not sleep without it." For a moment she hesitated.

"Very well—but I will not sleep long, and when I wake up you must let me bail. Will you?"

"Yes," he answered, quietly, "when you wake up."

The cold, blue light of early morning was glimmering thinly through the

ports when the girl awoke. She was lying in the same position, but was covered from head to foot with a heavy blanket. Her first conscious impression was of a machine-like object which rhythmically rose and fell. As the mist gradually cleared from her mind she saw that it was Eric, and that still he bailed as he was bailing when she had dropped asleep the night before.

"Eric!" she gasped, as the awful conviction that she had slept the night through, slowly possessed her. "Oh, why didn't you wake me?"

He turned to her a cheerful face in which any signs of the arduous night were singularly lacking.

"That wasn't in the contract," he said, with a smile, "you were to relieve me when you woke up, now having awakened you may relieve me while I get some breakfast, but first I want to take a look around." He stepped up into the cockpit and a moment later she heard him shout: "Come up here, Elinor, never mind the old bucket."

With a slight dizziness which she attributed to the motion of the boat, she made her way on deck. The sun was just rising with a veil before its face and from a clear, hard, Western sky the wind was blowing in humming blasts. The boat was pitching sluggishly in a short white-rimmed head sea, but the soul of the entire scene, to Elinor's eyes, was a small bark-rigged vessel not a mile away, which was bearing down upon them with a white mass of froth flying from under her bulging bows.

"What did I tell you, dear?" cried Eric, gleefully, "they must have seen *that*," he pointed to a small reversed ensign that was flying from the juremast.

Side by side and in silence they watched the approach of the vessel. When close aboard she rounded to and a moment later a boat which had been dropped on the leeward side came crawling around under her stern, headed for them and was quickly alongside. There were three men at the oars and one at the tiller. They gaped at the castaways without comment.

"Good-morning," said Eric, to the man in the stern, who looked rather like

a Penobscot Indian. The man stared unwinkingly.

"How-do," he returned, gutturally, then continued in precisely the same tone and without pause, "Jump-in—plenty-wind—much-hurry!"

"Can't you tow in my boat?" asked Eric, mildly, "you're entitled to salvage, you know, and one man in her can keep her dry——"

"Never-mind—jump-in — all-right — no-can-stop!" droned the Indian, monotonously, then seeing Eric hesitate, he burst out with an odd fierceness, "S'pose you be dam-fool!—drown an-be-dam?" then with a snarl at his wooden-faced crew he cried with the "down-East" drawl, "C-a-ahst off!"

"Hold on," cried Eric, in amazement. "You're not going to leave us, are you? Jump in Elinor," he added, hurriedly, "this chap doesn't understand me. I'll talk to the captain when we get aboard."

They scrambled into the boat, climbing over the squat, stolid crew as if they had been so many pieces of freight. Eric spoke once or twice to the taciturn coxswain, but the only reply he could get was a grunt.

"Make him answer you, Eric," said Elinor, a trifle sharply, for the man's rudeness angered her.

"Wait until we get aboard, Elinor," replied Eric, quietly, and they relapsed into silence.

The girl looked curiously at the three men who were pulling. All were short, swarthy, loosely hung and thickly built. Two were of the usual type of seaboard French Canadians and appeared to be brothers from their strong resemblance. The bowman was smaller and darker, with thick, black curly hair and a hooked nose. He wore crescent-shaped gold earrings and had a gaudy, but very unclean sash about his waist.

As they pulled up alongside of the bark, some orders were shouted in a thin, querulous voice, and at the same time the face of a very old man appeared over the rail.

"Hurry up—hurry up, Baptiste," he whined. "Fust thing ye know ye'll hev the skipper up an' thar'll be hell ter pay!"

The coxswain growled back a disrespectful answer, and clutching the after-chains with one hand, grabbed Elinor roughly by the arm with the other, and pushed her violently at the short sea ladder hanging over the side.

"Let go!" cried the girl, angrily. "Eric, he's hurting my arm."

"Let go of the lady's arm, please," said Eric, quietly, "she can get up alone!"

"Ah-h-h git-up—git-up!" growled the man. Elinor seized the ladder and Eric followed her in silence. As they stepped on the deck they were met by a very old man who, in spite of his advanced years, seemed remarkably active.

"Haow do—haow do!" he mumbled, with a senile quaver in his voice. "Blowed off shore and dismasted in th' squall last evenin', weren't ye?—Reckined so," he turned to the man at the wheel.

"Sou'wes' 'n b'west!" he whined, complainingly. "Peter," he called, "tell that dum cook ter come here!"

"Are you the mate, sir?" asked Eric, "because I thought you might care to tow in my boat, as——"

"Tow nawthin'!" interrupted the old man. "Yes, young feller—I'm the mate o' this bark—an' it's downright lucky fer you thet I was on deck and not the skipper——"

He was interrupted by a curt "*Qu' voulez-vous?*" at his elbow. Eric and Elinor started in wonder. Behind them stood a man who appeared to be over seven feet in height and built on something of the general lines of a giraffe. He was thin to emaciation, and his great height was modified by a double stoop—one at the junction of his neck with his body which threw his head forward in a sinister way, and the other at the middle of his spine. To accentuate his grotesqueness he was also an albino, and his pink eyes shone from a face full of malevolence.

"Jean," said the old mate, nervously, "this here gal an' feller was——"

A sudden change had come upon the grotesque cook, and turning abruptly he slunk away forward where he disap-

peared through the hatch like a great white spider. The mate turned quickly and his jaw dropped, while his horny, withered old hand fumbled nervously at his lips.

"God-a-mighty!" he mumbled, "thar's the skipper. Thought he was fixed fer th' next tew days er I never would ha' huv to!" His voice broke suddenly, and he began to sob in sheer nervousness, while a sort of senile palsy shook the bent old legs. Suddenly he grasped Eric by the arm.

"Stand by me, young feller—say ez haow yew was in a pullin'-boat an' we jes' luffed a little an' picked ye up. He'd kill me if he knew as haow I'd stopped ter lower!"

Eric glanced at the mate with the quick suspicion that he was raving, and indeed the vague idea had entered his head that they had boarded a vessel manned by lunatics. Suddenly Elinor gave a quick tug at his sleeve.

"Look, Eric!" she whispered.

The bark was of an old-fashioned type with t'gallant-forecastle, low in the waist, and high poop. They were standing just under the break of the raised quarter-deck and Eric was facing forward. As Elinor tugged at his sleeve he glanced over his shoulder, and looked into the ugliest face that he had ever seen.

Just above him, with his shaggy head pitched forward between his heavy, hunched shoulders, his thick, bowed legs spread well apart, and his great gnarled hands hanging by the thumbs which were hooked into his trousers' pockets, was a gorilla-like figure who stood and stared at them balefully. The bestiality of his face was accentuated by the glimpses they got of it through a black mangy beard, and its most prominent features were a pair of thick blue lips and a large wen over the left eye. His nationality might have been anything.

As Eric looked at this man he was conscious of an odd tightening of his muscles, and a queer sensation of prickling that seemed to run up his spine and bristled the short, cropped hair on the back of his head. For a moment he stared at him half fascinated, then

glanced quickly at Elinor. The girl was deathly pale, and as Eric's eyes fell on her, she caught a quick, sharp breath, as if in pain. The incident brought back his self-possession and he turned squarely to the vulpine captain, who was still watching them in silence.

"Captain," said Eric, politely, "we were blown off shore yesterday, and your mate here has just picked us up out of a small boat—" he hesitated, rather falteringly, for the utter lack of responsiveness in the man's unwinking stare made it difficult to go on.

"Where are you bound, captain?" asked Eric, with an effort. The question was utterly ignored. Eric turned to the senile mate.

"Where are you bound?" he asked, softly.

"B'B'Bweenas Ayers," mumbled the old man through his trembling fingers.

Eric turned to the captain and as he started to speak was again conscious of the queer tingling that ran over his scalp.

"Captain, we want to get home as quickly as possible. I will pay you what you ask to set us ashore at the nearest port—or if you had rather—" again he paused, for the livid eyes above him were fixed on Elinor with a gaze that was insupportable. Suddenly the captain beckoned to the quarter-deck with a curt gesture.

"Yump up here, gell," he ordered, thickly. He turned to Eric. "Git for'ard, you."

There was a second's pause, then something swept past Elinor with the soft, cling-footed spring of a panther, and a lithe figure in sea-bedraggled ducks had leaped to the quarter-deck.

With a snarl of rage the captain swung in his tracks and threw up two enormous arms, but the figure in white slipped under one of them; there came the slap and jar of a heavily-landed blow, then another, and the grotesque figure of the burly captain whirled half-way around and fell heavily across a skylight. At the same instant Eric had jumped for the rail and wrenched a heavy belaying pin from the mizzen rigging, but before he had tugged it free

the man at the wheel had darted at him like a terrier.

"Eric! Look out!" screamed Elinor. He heard her and turned just in time, for the bowman in the boat, who had relieved the wheel on coming aboard, was at him knife in hand.

With a quick instinct which told him that this was a fight with everything within reach, Eric met him as he rushed, half bent, with a heavy kick in the chest that stretched him gasping on the deck, and none too soon, for the captain was struggling to his feet and groping for a weapon.

Before he could succeed Eric sprang in on him and landed two crushing blows with the pin, one across the face and the other on the top of the head which dropped him senseless and bleeding.

"Come up here quick, Elinor!" called Eric, and although the voice was that of some one else, she obeyed him swiftly.

The crew had gathered for'ard in a questioning, murmuring knot. Eric spied in the waist the heavy iron brake of the primitive hand pump.

He glanced for a moment at the man whom he had kicked and who was lying on his side breathing heavily, with the blood trickling from his mouth. Then he dropped lightly into the waist, secured the iron bar, and was back on the quarter-deck in an instant. The old mate was still standing in the same spot, mumbling and doddering.

"Look out, Elinor," said Eric, in the same odd, thick voice. She stepped aside and he picked up the body of the prostrate helmsman and threw him off the poop onto the deck below, where he lay, sprawling grotesquely. For a moment Eric leaned on the skylight, breathing heavily and glaring forward with bloodshot eyes; then suddenly straightening up he called raucously:

"One of you hands come aft here!" There was a slight pause and no one moved. Eric burst into a fury.

"Won't come, eh—then, by God, I'll go for you!"

Before the dazed girl at his side knew what was about to happen he had leaped

into the waist at a bound and was running forward, roaring maledictions at every step and brandishing the iron bar above his head. The group of sailors hesitated, wavered, then broke suddenly and with one accord dived for the fore-castle hatch. The Indian, Baptiste, alone hesitated and leaped nimbly back as Eric swung a crushing blow at the shoulders of the last man disappearing down the companionway. From the other side of the windlass the man eyed him fearfully.

"What want?" he croaked.

"You, you dog!" snarled Eric, furiously. Before the sailor, quick as he was, could evade him he had vaulted over the cumbersome machinery, and so quickly that the man had not a chance to use his knife, jammed his head back against the stock of the anchor and landed half a dozen trip-hammer blows upon his face and throat; then shifting his hand to the collar he started forward again, dragging the man in one hand and his bar in the other. Right up the ladder onto the quarter-deck he went, and threw his bleeding victim in a heap at the foot of the vacant wheel which was kicking idly from the shock of the choppy sea.

"Get on your feet and steer, you swine!" growled Eric. The man struggled to his feet and steadied himself weakly by the spokes.

"How-steer?" he whined.

"Head her in for the land, damn you, and sail her right, do you hear, or I'll mash your head in!"

The man turned the spokes slowly, while the blood trickled from his face in little streams. Eric called to the still doddering mate.

"Get some of those hounds up to trim sail—wake up, old man: go root 'em out, and tell 'em if they don't come on the jump, I'll come after them myself—wake up, do you hear me?"

For a moment the old man stared vacantly; then with a start he came to himself and shambled forward with faltering steps. They heard his voice whining into the fore-castle, and one by one the men emerged and gazed furtively about them. The old mate hob-

bled aft, the men following in trepidation. Custom, which is stronger than logic, dictated that orders come from the quarter-deck rather than from the man. A quavering command was given by the old mate and the crew went about their work with a stolid indifference that was belied by their stealthy glances aft.

Elinor had sunk down in a helpless little heap against the bulwarks, and Eric, leaning on his bar, watched the men in gloomy silence. His eyes were blood-shot and his face drawn and haggard. Once or twice he brushed his hand across his forehead. From the inanimate heap on the skylight there escaped an occasional groan. The sailor in the waist had crawled away.

For an hour they sailed in silence while the line of shore ahead grew gradually more distinct. Eric glanced for an instant at Elinor, then savagely hailed one of the men who was standing dumbly near the mainmast.

"Tell that rabbit-faced freak of a cook to bring us some coffee and biscuits—cabin stores, mind you—and to be quick about it, if he knows what's good for him!"

The man stared uncertainly. Eric whipped up the belaying pin which was lying on the deck at his feet.

"By God!" he raved, furiously, "get a move on ye—d'ye hear?" He drew back the heavy pin and sent it whirling with all of his strength and skill, and it was only the man's quick drop that saved him. He fled away forward, while his mates looked askance at the raging figure above them. Soon the cook brought the food which he carried to them with a cringe in his grotesque figure that would have been ridiculous at any other time.

They ate—the girl with effort; Eric ravenously, and as they were eating they were hailed by the mate.

"Boat dead ahead, sir—appears to be lobsterin'."

Eric looked up heavily over the rough bowl from which he was drinking in wolfish gulps.

"All right," he growled—"when we get up to her, set us aboard."

The grizzled lobsterman and his half-grown son gaped in wonder as from the dingy, old-time bark which had so unaccountably run up and hove to, there came a boat which headed directly for them.

"Them fool Canuks hev got lost, I reckon, and want ter find out whether this is Cape Cod er Hatt'ras," he remarked to his gaping son.

Their surprise increased as the boat drew near. In the stern sheets there arose to his feet a fair man in unclean ducks who grasped in his hand a heavy iron bar. Beside him sat a dark-haired woman in white yachting costume.

"Back her up, curse you—back her up!" ordered the man. "D'ye think we want to crawl over your filthy carcasses?"

The boat was backed up under the lee of the lobster smack, and in a sort of daze the grizzled lobsterman extended his hand to the woman, whose face was of a beauty that seemed uncanny, coming thus from one of the foul spots of the sea.

From the deck the man turned to the crew of the boat.

"Now *clear!*—before I send this bar in amongst you!" He turned to the wondering lobsterman, who, as his senses returned, saw that the face before him was that of a man walking in his sleep.

"Take us to Provincetown, captain—as soon as you can, please," he said, wearily.

"Hey—what's that?" asked the astonished man.

A blackness began to gather in the haggard face, but before he could speak the girl interrupted in a low, sweet voice.

"Our boat was wrecked, captain—and that vessel picked us up. We wish to get back as soon as possible—we will pay you well for your trouble."

"Ye *don't* say, ma'am!—I wantner know!—why, o' course, Jim, get the jib on her. D'ye know," he went on as he busied himself with his boat, "I couldn't guess what was up—he acted so kinder rough with them fellers in the boat—but they're a right smart scurvy

lot, them 'Scotiemen!" He jerked a thick thumb at the receding boat.

"They are beasts!" said the girl, with a shudder. "Eric, dear," she added, "lie down on this thwart and put your head in my lap. You are worn out."

The man obeyed her meekly. The kindly lobsterman threw a tarpaulin over him and almost immediately he slept.

Soon, as they dashed briskly through the water, the girl told the story to the wondering men.

"Your husband, ma'am?" said the inquisitive helmsman.

The girl leaned down and tenderly stroked the fair, damp hair.

"Not yet," she answered, softly—"but he is to be—very soon, I hope." And they sailed on, swiftly and in peace.



THE WANDERING HOME

By Richard Le Gallienne

Author of "Prose Fancies," "The Quest of the Golden Girl," Etc.

I.

THE wandering home! The expression, you will say, is paradoxical.

Is it not of the essence of home that it is rooted, stable, always sung with welcome and peace in the same green corner of the earth? That is what home means. I know—and, perhaps, fortunately for themselves, that is how most people think of home. Well, it is a question of temperament, like so much else in life.

For the average, or, if you prefer, the normal temperament, the world seems insecure unless it has assured for itself by irrefragable legal holdfasts a lifelong anchorage in the treacherous stream of existence. If it is able to assure the continuance of this anchored safety to those that come after it, and if, too, it should happen itself to have inherited it from those that went before, its sense of security is as the roots of the mountains. The ideal home of such a temperament seems typified by those old country houses one often sees in America, where the family graveyard is attached to the house, an extension of the garden.

The poetry of the ideal is indisputable. It vividly and appealingly concentrates all that we mean by the family sentiment—the conception of men and women not in units, nor even in pairs, nor yet even in single households of parents and children, but rather in clusters of such households radiating from one original root of home—the sentiment of the clan.

There, just beyond the garden, lie the strong builders of the home, the old men of iron, and the beautiful old grandmothers. They have done their work, and they take their rest, while the young folk go on with the work in the old house. But, though they are dead, they still belong to the home, familiar presences that still have their say in living affairs—waking up, as it were, now and again, to say a strong, wise word on occasion and then to sleep again. Yes, in death they are still at home. They have not been sent away, numbered exiles, to some Siberia of the dead. They lie safe within the circuit of the warm walls they built, and in the dark nights the home lights stream across their graves. And sometimes, as

their children read over their names on the crooked tombstones, it makes them feel, as we say, more "at home in the world," to realize that when they themselves die, they too will go on thus belonging to the old home, and not wander like orphaned ghosts in the shadowy land.

This is the way of one temperament. Perhaps the majority of people feel like that. It is the way of another temperament, a temperament fundamentally different, that I am now concerned to present.

To this other temperament, that sense of rootedness, of anchorage, in the world which is so assuring and consoling to the first temperament, is one to inspire it with feelings almost precisely the reverse, feelings little short of terror. To this temperament the signing of a lease seems like the signing of a death warrant. It brings one so appallingly face to face with the Last Fact of existence. Even a short lease, after one has turned thirty, is sufficient to inspire this feeling. Say, it is only for seven years. Say you are thirty-five. When the lease is out you will be forty-two. Another seven years' lease will bring you to the threshold of fifty. A third brings you to fifty-six, a fourth to sixty-three, and a fifth to—three-score years and ten! And the odds are that two of those leases you will never sign.

Or you may reflect to yourself something after this manner: To-day, when I sign this lease, I may still call myself a young man—though really young people wouldn't call me so. At all events, there is yet a little of the cake of youth remaining. By the time this lease has run out it will be eaten to its last crumb. To-day my little daughter is still a child. By the time this lease has run out, she will be a woman. To-day my hair still passes for brown. By the time this lease has run out it will be frankly gray. People will say: "Oh, lots of young people have gray hair!" Yes! but the lease is up, and you know you are not young any more, and will not be young again forever.

It is thoughts like these that run shivering through some of us as we

sign a lease, and faithfully promise a landlord, under sundry pains and penalties, to live in the same house, cultivate the same plot of garden, walk the same streets, catch the same trains, for no less than seven out of the few years left us, seven—with an option of renewal to fourteen or twenty-one. You see plainly whose are the features of the grim lawyer, and you see the smile on them, as you set your finger on the little red seal and declare this your act and deed.

Yes, you have promised to live in the same house for seven years. For seven years that might have been packed so full of experiment and experience, you have promised to do the same thing. The gong will sound for meals every day at the same hours. You will walk at the same hour. You will sit and read at the same hour. The only change will be in the servants, and the only consolation that you are treading the same round with—the same woman.

I would not be misunderstood as writing ungraciously of this sameness in mortal things. Life is, and must be, made up of the same things. But the art of life is to make ourselves forget that they are the same things—the art, and the problem. Nor is it, indeed, that we would change these same things for other things. The burden of sameness is not in the things themselves, but rather in the monotony of their arrangement. The ingredients of the same old dish are excellent, but the cook lacks versatility. All that is needed is the transforming touch of that "perpetual slight novelty" which Keats declared to be characteristic of true poetry. That the spring always brings the same flowers and the same birds is not matter for this complaint, for they never seem the same; nor that the face of a friend should always look the same, in spite of the years; or that those who loved us once should go on loving us just the same. These carry within them that particular freshness which is the essence of novelty. Perhaps one can illustrate the kind of novelty of which some of us are in constant need by a comparatively trivial comparison. Take

the arrangement of the pictures in one's room. They are, we will say, all good pictures, pictures which wear well, and not merely brilliant or sensational memoranda of past moods of choice. They are deep wells of beauty, the bottom of which we have never seen, nor will ever see. Yet there are times when they seem to be failing us. It almost seems as if they have given us all they had to give. We, perhaps, fancy that they are worn out. We need new pictures. The truth, however, is that we have grown weary, not of the pictures themselves, but of their arrangement. If we move them about a little, set them in unaccustomed lights, hang them in other rooms, we shall suddenly find all their freshness back again, and come upon them from time to time with quite a thrilling shock of novelty.

The image is homely and limited and by no means covers all the ground. It may serve to illustrate the burden of the sameness of things, but it does not touch that terror of securely invested repose and reiteration which is a veritable bugbear of some natures—the wild dread of being “settled down.”

To be “comfortably settled in life” is the very proper aim of most men and women, and so far as the term merely refers to a secure income, even the most incorrigible world-wanderer will not find fault with it. The complaint is not of a settled income, but of having to spend it in certain settled ways and in certain settled conditions. When we say a ship is settling down we mean she will sail the seas no more, no more feel the adventurous wind in her sails, touch no more strange islands, nor steer her course again by unfamiliar stars. So with a man when he signs the long lease. He is done with experiment. His adventures are over. The sea is wide and shimmering about him. Mysterious ports call him from behind the setting sun. But no! his sailing days are over. He is settling down!

Now the problem for this wild bird that dreads the cage, this nomad that hates the immovable roof, is: How so to order his days that they may present

the illusion of that perpetual slight novelty, and not hint too loudly of their swift passing away.

A skilful gardener, as we know, can so cunningly arrange his trees and lawns, and wind about his walks in so illusive a fashion that even a few acres may be filled with surprises, and you can walk in and out for quite a long time without suspecting how small is the garden. So with life, the problem is to hide the end of the garden, to make-believe it is a never-ending pleasure and never to hint at the stranger waiting by the iron gate that opens into the haunted wilderness outside.

This, you will perceive, is a very different view from that of those old American settlers who liked to think of the graveyard at the end of the garden; but it must not be confused with a morbid or cowardly fear of death. The Wanderer I am thinking of does not fear death as death—he only fears its shrinking influence upon life. To him and to natures like his, the *memento mori* does not so much quicken the pace of his living by its warning to make the most of existence. Rather is it apt to make him say: “With so short a time to do anything in, it is hardly worth doing anything at all; with so short a time to be happy in, it is hardly worth while beginning to enjoy.”

There is in all significant human acts an indefinable implication of eternity. We involuntarily do our work with, one might say, an almost instinctive sense of its being somehow or other immortally important. The feeling is not in any sense reasoned. Reasoning may easily dissipate it. But it is none the less there. And we enter into our joys with the same gusto of immortality. One of the reasons for the conquering force of youth is its buoyant possession of this motive sense. Death has not yet entered into its calculations. As life advances, however, death is seen to be something more than the old wives' tale we had thought it. It may well be that we misunderstand death. This sense of immortal impulse in human action of which I have been writing may very well mean that immortal significance

it seems to mean. If so, it is the more important for us to resist the blighting influence on life of our very natural misinterpretation of death. Maybe death is not an end, but one more radiant beginning. It does not, however, wear that aspect as year by year we approach nearer to it, and, therefore, it is all to the good of efficient living that we meditate as little as possible on our latter end.

Now for the temperament which, for the moment, I represent, there is no more insistent reminder of that latter end than the rooted, long-leased home. Even amid all the June glories of the distinguished old garden, the warm reassurance of the passionate summer air, the Wanderer shivers as the cold thought takes him of the unchanging stretched-out days, and of that last inevitable day when, with the hushed pomp of mourners, he shall pass out through the Georgian doorway, across the village green, to the dull old churchyard. It is terrible to be quite certain where you will die. The certainty makes you feel something like dead already, and:

"Enterprises of great thrift and moment
In this respect their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action."

II.

The Wanderer had felt all this very restlessly, and so had the Wanderer's Wife—for what a mistake it is to think that Woman is the born Stay-at-Home! The Wanderer and the Wanderer's Wife loved each other with all their hearts—and both their heads. Nature had made them nomads; but nature, too, had made it impossible for them to wander long or far from each other.

They had been married now for nearly twelve years, and yet it was plain truth, and no smug platitude for social publication, that their love was as young and fresh as ever. They had never bored each other for five minutes. The stress of so many years of life had so

far failed to reveal any serious lack of harmony between them. Nature had evidently selected them with great care for each other—but they had been wise, too, and skilfully seconded nature with that tact of loving, for lack of which too many unions equally well planned by nature fail of success.

"One needs to be clever, as well as devoted, to love successfully," the Wanderer's Wife was fond of saying. "Love, particularly married love, is the most difficult of the fine arts. Love needs enormous taking care of—needs amusement, distraction and perpetual refreshment."

There was, of course, nothing particularly new about this wisdom. It was the success and the novelty of its application that gave significance to the words; and it was, indeed, no small success for two such natures to have been married for so long, and yet to have retained the precious sense of vista, the salt of adventure, in their lives. All the security they felt the need of was in the deep sense and tried knowledge of their love. They did not feel the need of daily monotony to make them sure of the stability of their marriage bond, nor did they conceive marriage as a state in which two people never take their eyes off each other. They were, indeed, mysteriously two in one, yet they remained two as well, two separate beings, with the need occasionally of separate atmospheres to breathe in. They were blissfully married, but, at the same time, blessedly single.

"The first thing to remember in marriage," the Wanderer's Wife would say, "is that, talking without cant, each one has other needs in life besides the other. These needs may be pleasures that the other cannot share, or they may be simple, innocent habits or personal methods, with which marriage so often disastrously and stupidly interferes—such as the need, say, of a silent hour alone, or of a solitary walk. The truest lovers must occasionally get on each other's nerves—that is why a large house is wisest for love to live in, and why love in a cottage seldom succeeds. Then, while one of the true delights you marry

for is that of doing things together, there are times when a certain impatience of this perpetual duality of all our actions is to be feared, and an irresistible restlessness to do something for and all by oneself—just as when one was a girl or boy—comes over us. For once not to have to share, for once not to have our little adventures companioned even by the most sympathetic companion! For once to be allowed to forget that there is such a being even as the best husband in the world!"

This, no doubt, had an heretical sound for some ears, but the experienced ones conceded the wisdom of the Wanderer's Wife, and the well-known success of her principles in practice, silenced criticism.

The Wanderer and his Wife attributed much of their happiness to the fact that they seldom lived for long in the same place. Their constancy was largely due to the stimulus of change, and the freshness of their love largely came of the freshness which was thus maintained in their own natures. Through the windows of their house of life fresh currents of air were continually pouring, and when the aspect from one window wearied they turned to another. In fact, their house of life should rather be described as a tent pitched according to their mood, now in one latitude, now in another—so to say, the portable *pied-à-terre* of two fellow pilgrims, who sought the elixir of youth in company and felt that they had found it with every new experience, or every rejuvenation of an old one.

Two children had been born to the Wanderers. The girl, Pervenche, with her deep forest eyes, the color of which no man could tell, and her little nut-shaped face, half hidden between the big, brown foliage of her hair, was now ten—she was already a woman in fairyland—and the boy, Asra, with his northern blue eyes and obstinately curling gold hair, was eight.

As you would expect, heads were sometimes shaken over the effect upon these young lives of the Wandering Home. "No home-life, poor darlings,"

had been said of them. Such is the superficial wisdom of the ignorant. Pervenche and Asra knew better. Instead of one home, with one playroom, they had homes and playrooms all over the world, with an ever-changing succession of toys. Instead of only feeling at home in one little corner of one little town, or one little village of an earth glittering with strange cities, and teeming with towns as stars in the sky, and villages as sand on the seashore, their young imaginations were already at home in a hundred distant places, and their young memories already stored with travel pictures from half the planet. Homeless! Why, if ever two children felt at home in the world it was Pervenche and Asra, for, wherever they went, the world was like a new picture-book with the wisest and most loving father and mother to turn over its pages and tell them its meaning. Instead, too, of growing up prejudiced little provincials, they were already qualifying to be citizens of every nation, and, instead of merely having friends who lived in just the same sort of houses as they did, and talked the same language and wore the same clothes, they already numbered dear friends who called them the prettiest pet names in French and Italian—and perhaps the dearest friend they ever had was a tiny little gentleman who used to tell them the beautiful names of things in Japanese. Many little children would have called these people "foreigners," but Asra and Pervenche would not have understood. "Foreigners?" No, they were friends. So much for the place of the child in the Wandering Home.

III.

The Wanderer and his Wife were standing on their little roof-garden right away at the top of one of those fortresses which in New York they call apartment houses. In Italy they would be called *campanili*, or some other name more appropriate to their beautiful, soaring strength.

It was the close of a brilliant Janu-

any day, and the sun was setting, as, to some of us it seems, it can only set over New York, in a glory of grim towers and city smoke, a tumbled beauty, formless, unconventional, yet sternly impressive. From where they stood, turning to right and left, they could see the North and the East Rivers gleaming at the ends of their embattled street. Silhouetted rigging now and again stood out for a moment against the gleam, passing slowly out to sea. The infinite freshness of the Atlantic swept up over the vast towers already peopled with lights. Cressets and sky-signs began to fill the dusk with fiery writing. Up Sixth Avenue the elevated railway moved like a magic lantern-slide, and out of the deepening night far sea-horns called homelessly, homelessly.

"This is New York," said the Wanderer's Wife, as they stood hushed on their tower. "It is so beautiful—I wonder why we should ever want to live anywhere else."

"So do I," said the Wanderer, and after a pause he added: "But we do. Do you hear the wandering horns calling us out there:

"Where shall we wander,
Said he and she.
'O anywhere yonder,
Anywhere yonder,
Out to sea."

"But where shall we wander this time, child?" he continued, "for I feel your wings already beating for flight."

"Yes! to which of our homes shall we wander?" said the wife, laughing. "I know it's preposterous at the time of the year, but I've got a sudden homesickness for the dear old face of Madame Henriot. I wonder how she is."

Madame Henriot was the old lady who looked after their little *pied-à-terre* in Paris, and, as the wife spoke, there came before her eyes a picture of that vivid city, putting on her jewels in the frivolous lute-stringed twilight. Like a city of fireflies it flashed into her imagination, and the sound of it came back to her, gay and sad as one of its own chan-

sonnettes, that wonderful murmur of Paris like the sound of a great shallow river, blended with the singing of many sirens, that seems to be calling you—to come and drown, to come and drown, to come and drown.

"We can go to Paris and London later," said the Wanderer, "but now——"

"London!" exclaimed the wife, her mind instantly making another picture. "Yes! I should love to see London too,—dear old London, with its burly roar—like the sound of a great waterfall busily turning mills. I wonder how our little Chatterton garret is looking;" and she was back on the instant in some tiny old-world chambers with low beams and undulating oak floor, tucked under the roof at the top of a crazy, winding staircase; a swallow's nest, with red tiles and a sweeping view of the trees in Lincoln's Inn Square swaying to and fro in a prison of historic architecture.

"Yes," she said, musingly, pointing to the fading glow in the west, "but you must confess that the sun sets very prettily behind the Law Library in Lincoln's Inn."

Then the growing chill of the night drove them in to the lighted sitting-room behind them.

Pervenche and Asra were in the sitting-room, turning over picture-books, on the edge of bedtime.

"Where would you like us to go this year, Pervenche?" asked the mother.

Pervenche looked up out of her deep cave of hair, and, after a moment's serious thought, answered:

"I think, mother, I should like best to go to the Orange Trees in the Blue Mountains. It is quite a long time since we were there."

"But how about your French, dear?"

"Oh, mother, I know far more than I did then."

"Suppose old Nonotte should ask you to say one of those little songs she used to teach you——"

"I remember them, mother—at least, some of them. I can say *Les Hironnelles*, I'm sure."

"Say it, little one," said the father, stroking her long hair.

After a quaint little clearing of her throat, by way of preparation, Pervenche began:

"Que j' aime à voir les hirondelles,
À ma fenêtre, tous les ans,
Venir m' apporter des nouvelles
De l' approche du doux printemps!
Le même nid, me disent-elles,
Va revoir les mêmes amour:
Ce n' est qu' à des amants fidèles
A vous annoncer les beaux jours.

"Lorsque les premières gelées
Font tomber les feuilles des bois,
Les hirondelles rassemblées
S' appellent toutes sur les toits:
Partons, partons, se disent-elles,
Fuyons la neige et les autans;
Point d' hiver pour les cœurs fidèles;
Ils sont toujours dans le printemps."

"Bravo, dear!" said the father, as Pervenche finished, with a little gasp of achievement. "So you would really like to go to the Orange Trees in the Blue Mountains. Well, mother and I will think about it. But what is Asra's opinion?"

"I," answered Asra, stoutly, "would rather go to North Star Castle, and play among the rocks and go out with the old fishermen."

North Star Castle was their name for an old inn right away near the top of Norway, morticed in among rocks and fishing nets, and filled with the sound of the sea.

"But it would be so cold there yet, Asra. Why, we should have to walk in snowshoes, and wear skins, like the Eskimo. . . ."

"I should love snowshoes," rejoined Asra.

"And perhaps eat candles . . ."

the father continued, smiling.

"Oh, father!" both the children laughed, skeptically.

"Or frozen whale."

"Oh, father!"

When the children had gone, the Wanderer turned to his wife.

"What do you think of Pervenche's suggestion?" he said.

"I second it," she answered.

So it was decided that they were to

take the next Italian boat, and come at length to the Orange Trees in the Blue Mountains.

The Orange Trees in the Blue Mountains was their name for an old mill-house lying in a fertile valley, at the back of the dark hills which run like a wall along the French Riviera. It is hidden away four or five miles inland behind an old rocky castellated town that overlooks the Mediterranean, a scramble of narrow, climbing streets, little shops, market place and old parish church, all huddled under the grim shadow of the old feudal castle. The valley is so spacious as rather to be a plain—a vivid oasis of cultivation refreshing to the eye and heart amid the swart solitudes of the surrounding hills. A little river ripples like a harpsichord through the valley, past whispering trees and round grassy corners glittering with anemones. There, too, is a vineyard, acres of tendriled green, and a great cluster of barnlike buildings, in which the wine is stored in mysterious vats and barrels. An avenue of limes runs like a silver lane across one end of the valley, and, if you walk up this lane, you come at last to The Orange Trees in the Blue Mountains—a rambling old mill-house tucked into a ferny elbow of the hillside, just where the river sings its way back among the hills, turning the mossed old water-wheel as it goes. Along the river bank runs the big old garden, rambling up the hillside, and here in the sun grow the orange trees: solar systems of golden fruit in a heaven of bright and bushy emerald. Above the garden is a little olive orchard, mounting in terraces of sunny shadow; regular irregularity of twisted trunk, and cloud upon cloud of sunburnt green. Each step of the broad staircase is a long floor of laughing flowers; a terrace of olive trees, then a little jump of hyacinths; a terrace of olive trees, then a ledge of yellow roses; a terrace of olive trees, then a strip of beans in flower; a terrace of olive trees, then a lake of freshest violets; so, by steps of orchard and flower bed, with shadowy resting places of sudden rock, the olive trees

give place at last to the little cork-oaks that clothe the hills with a thickset garment of small, dark, shining leaves—the gate of the wilderness.

The Wanderers had come upon the place in one of their earliest wanderings together, and the old miller and his wife had taken them in to lodge there, one never-to-be-forgotten spring, before as yet either Pervenche or Asra had their present wide acquaintance with the world—in fact, before they had come into the world at all.

The place was indeed to them that hidden garden somewhere in the world for all of us, a garden of which most of us have lost the key, or which we dare not visit again: the garden of rapture, of enchanted moments—the Eternal Eden. There was not a corner of that little valley, not a bend of the stream, not a dingle in the woods, not a path across the hills, which had not for them a fairy significance; nor yet a face they had seen, nor a local characteristic, nor any smallest occurrence of the time, which was not then and now of the stuff of dreams.

O! those old picnics by the stream side! One of Mother Michaud's delicious patés made especially for them, and exquisite white cheese, and a litre of the valley's own wine, bought from Bacchus himself, as they called the huge old keeper of the vineyard—true wine of the earth, for forty centimes the litre. And some exquisite book, not so much to read in, but just because they knew it to be full of beautiful words. Then to lie back into the golden grass with their cigarettes, and look up at the sky through the dainty trees. And, all the time, the running of the river and the visiting butterflies and—themselves.

And those long tramps among the hills, hills which at first promised nothing but the somberness of the cork-oaks, and the metallic rocky footways, but which were presently seen to be silvered with asphodel, and embroidered with orchids—ivory, and velvet, and dew, and green with unsuspected nooks of grassy freshness. How they would start at dawn while there was still a feeling of starlight in the air, and the sun had not yet warmed to his work! Up and a-foot before nature's business was a-hum, and while its beauty was but half awake, wandering on while the day slowly kindled like a newly lit fire about them, on to the merry blaze and roar of noon. And all the time that thrilling comradeship of two who are at once comrades and lovers. All the little excitements of the way—the high spirits, the wit, the romp of it all; and at length as noon would bring them with a sudden flash of amethyst to the Mediterranean and the old brasserie town. O! what an inspired appetite for lunch, an appetite so keen and fresh as almost to seem a spiritual rather than a physical hunger! Then the old garden of *Les Hesperides*; again orange trees, and arbors of yellow roses, and fair food and wine like laughter in the glass, and—each other.

All these and a hundred such pictures passed through the minds of the Wanderers as they sat musing a moment after the children had gone. They both came out of their dream-garden at the same moment, and their thoughts met at the gate.

"No wonder Pervenche loves the Orange Trees in the Blue Mountains," said the Wanderer, gently.

"Do you want to go there again?" asked his wife, smiling.



JEST OR EARNEST

By Austen Hancock

IT all began on the tennis court. Molly and I had been playing all the morning and of course we had to go and rest before luncheon. I wanted to go down to the beach, but Molly dropped down in the shade at the side of the court and declared that she was too tired to move.

She didn't look tired, though. She had taken off her stock and rolled up her right sleeve and her fine coat of tan—which I had spent most of my leisure hours in helping her to acquire—had taken a little reddish tinge that was immensely becoming. As she played with her racket, twisting it in her slim fingers, I could see the muscles of her arm under her fine brown skin. She had a wonderful muscle—for a girl.

"Wonder what young Cotter married Mrs. Pinkerton for?" I observed, idly. "She was after his money, of course, and why couldn't he see it?"

"Because, Jim," said Molly, "she was clever enough to make him think that she loved him for himself alone. Any woman could have done it—with a fair start. I almost believe the average woman could have done it with a good large handicap."

"Do you mean," said I, "that a woman could make a man believe she loved him when he knew that she was trying to do that very thing?"

"I believe it could be done, Jimmy," answered Molly reflectively.

"You'll have to show me," I replied. "I know you are all consummate actresses; but really, my child, you don't give us credit for any sense at all."

"I would show you, Jimmy, you scoff, if it were not for one thing."

"It's unkind of you to call Mr. Allbright a thing."

Molly blushed hotly and twisted a diamond on her fourth finger.

"I had forgotten Mr. Allbright," she confessed.

"Oh! you had forgotten Mr. Allbright. Then I refuse to stay out here any longer with you and without a chaperon. But before we go in the house—what was the one thing?"

"Jimmy," said Molly, solemnly, "you men are conceited."

"Yes," I answered mildly.

"And if I should make you think that I cared for you the least bit in the world other than as—as my oldest and dearest friend—why, Jimmy, you would always believe it. Nothing that I could say or do afterward would destroy the effect. In the bottom of your heart you would always believe that—and wonder if, after all—and I couldn't bear that!"

"Molly," I said impressively, "I am a grumpy old bachelor——"

"Of twenty-seven," put in Molly, wickedly.

"——and impervious to women's wicked wiles," I went on, ignoring her. "So if you want to amuse yourself for the rest of the summer, you may endeavor to—show me. I'll give you a month—and if you succeed, I'll give you that bracelet you admired at Tiffany's."

"And if I lose?" she asked.

"If you lose, make Allbright let me off officiating at his bloomin' wedding," I growled. "I know he's going to ask me, and I was best man nine times last winter. If it really was best, I wouldn't care, but it's only second best, after all, you know."

Molly looked at me for a moment. It was an awfully queer look. Then she sprang up.

"All right, Jim," she said. "I'll take the bet and you can begin to save your pennies. Come on—I'll help you take down the net."

As we bent over the post together she laid her hand gently on mine. I never noticed before how slim and cool her hand was.

"After all, Jimmy," she said in a low voice, "it won't be hard work to—to care for you."

I looked up in astonishment. Then I remembered and laughed. "By Jove," I said, "you are not losing any time."

She gave me another queer look.

"I'm afraid I'll forget that, too, Jimmy," she said.

That afternoon there was a fine breeze, so about three o'clock I went up to get Molly to go sailing with me. She was eager to go, although most girls would have thought twice before going out in that breeze. But Molly wasn't afraid of getting wet. She sat up on the edge of the boat with her feet braced against the centerboard, and held the sail until the rope almost blistered the inside of her hands. Then we rounded the Point and it was calmer. So I took the sail and beat up and down the shore. Molly moved nearer to me and clasped her hands about her knees. She had both sleeves rolled up this time, and her hair was blowing all about her face. It's the sort of hair that doesn't go out into straight strings like most hair, but just gets into soft little locks that make you feel like smoothing it back. Then she talked.

"Jim," she said, "I've known you all my life, haven't I? And you think you have known almost every thought I ever had; but you haven't, Jim, you haven't. You would be surprised, wouldn't you, if I told you that when I promised to marry Stephen, I was very much in love with some one else?"

I gasped.

"You—why didn't you tell me, Molly?" I said angrily.

"Tell you, Jim, dear? Why, what could you have done? He didn't care for me, you see, except as a friend. Ah! that was the worst of it," she went on, more as if she were talking to her-

self than to me, "to have him come and see me and act in his dear jolly friendly way, and tease me about other men, and write me long confidential letters full of all sorts of brotherly advice—and to know all the time that I was eating my heart out with the hope that perhaps he cared for me, after all—that was the hard part of it."

I always said Allbright wasn't good enough for Molly. If I had not been South at the time of their engagement—

"You have been so good to me, Jim—you won't mind if I tell you this? We have been chums, Jimmy, you and I, ever since the dear old days when you stole the robin's eggs and gave them to me, and I cried until you put them back. And then we quarreled and you wouldn't speak to me until my uncle gave me the white mice in the wonderful cage and I asked you to come over and see them. You forgave me then—that was like a man, Jimmy! And then you grew up and went away to college, and you fell in love with many maids and wrote and told me all about them—but you always got over it!"

I'm afraid I forgot several things just then.

"What a fool I was!" I said, "but —"

"—wait, let me finish. Then you were a great athlete and got on the track team—that's your track team cap you're wearing now, isn't it, Jimmy? How it reminds me of those dear old times! I came up to visit Jack, and you were so good to mamma and me, and took us all around the campus, and cut classes, and did every thing but break training. You wouldn't do that, even for us. That cap was new then, and you were so proud of it! Jack said you wore it to church. And there was a track meet and you ran—oh, you ran splendidly, Jim. And I was so proud of you—you fainted and had to be carried off the track, and if I hadn't held Jack's arm so tightly that it was black and blue afterwards, I should have fainted, too. I don't know why I am telling you this, Jim, unless—unless it's the cap that makes me remember so.

Why did you wear it to-day, Jimmy? It wasn't fair, was it? When I—when you went South, you know, and wrote and told me what a good fellow Stephen was and how awfully in love with me he was, and——"

"Molly, stop!" I cried. "I never wrote you anything like that—I swear I didn't!"

"Then what——" she began in a bewildered sort of way.

"Do you mean, Molly—ah, Molly—might it have been different if——"

I remembered, suddenly. There was but one way to find out the truth, and as Molly was a good sailor, I took it. I deliberately dropped the tiller and threw myself backwards into the water. I heard Molly scream as I went over and then I paddled about calmly until I saw that she had got the boat around and was coming back for me. I could see her face, white under the tan, as she leaned over the side.

"Can you catch the boat as we go by, Jim?" she called.

I could. I pulled myself in, with her help, and then, I blush to say, I fell unconscious in the bottom of the boat. It was badly done, I dare say. I am sure a woman could have done it better. But would a woman have made sure, as I did, that the wind was nearly gone and the boat would not capsize if left to manage itself?

Molly was on her knees beside me in a moment. She pulled my head onto her arm and—no, I'll not say whether she kissed me or not. But her face was very close to mine.

"Jim," she whispered, "Jim—speak to me. Open your eyes, dear, and tell me you're not hurt. Open your eyes

and let me tell you that—that I love you!"

I opened my eyes.

"What has happened?" I asked weakly. I thought that was the proper thing to say. Then I was sorry that I had come to myself, for Molly had dropped me and returned to the other side of the boat. I followed her and caught her hand—the left one. It was ringless.

"Molly," I said, "where is your—where is Stephen's ring?"

Molly turned her head aside. "I lost it," she said softly, "when I pulled you into the boat."

"Ah, but Molly," I said, drawing her closer, "you will put another one there, won't you, darling? Not Stephen's engagement ring, but mine; and—look up, Molly dear, and let me see your eyes."

Molly looked up. She was laughing.

"No, Jim dear," she said, "I shall put Stephen's back, for I only slipped it into my pocket while you were—regaining consciousness!"

There should be quotation marks expressing undiluted sarcasm with which to surround those last two words.

"And next time you fall off a boat, Jimmy, don't look back to make sure that you're not going to bump your head on the side. And don't forget which bracelet I liked at Tiffany's. You can give it to me as a wedding present. Still, it was sweet of you to ask me—out of pity—to marry you!"

I resumed possession of the tiller and headed the boat for home.

"I didn't ask you out of pity," I said.

And Molly laughed again. Her laughter seemed a trifle forced, though. I wonder if, after all——



PREMONITIONS

YOU read of deeds that cause your soul to burn;
Yet crush the moth upon the page you turn.
Ah! souls are moths that fly the ash of death,
And history is an ever-filling urn.

ISABELLE HOWE FISKE.

THE CLIMAX

By Katherine C. Thurston

Author of "The Circle"

I.

MICHAEL PRENDERGAST shut the door of his dispensary with a bang that sounded down the empty street, then lounged back against it and slowly lit his pipe.

The life of an Irish doctor in an Irish village is peculiarly his own—as aloof from interference as his rough tweed clothes or his manner of speech. The pipe drew badly; with the deliberation that characterized all he did, he made his position more comfortable and struck another match.

It was an exceptional September day. Across the roadway the thatched roofs looked warm and brown as clustered bees, to his right the ducks clamored vigorously around the village pump, to his left, where the street curved, a fragment of sea showed between yellow and white houses like a steel band against the dazzling sky.

He was no self-analyst, but he was aware of the light, clear warmth in a lifting of spirit. Unconsciously he moved forward and, looking up, let his eyes rest with a certain contentment on the battered house that spelled routine in his daily life—at the crooked window sashes and the notice of his attendance in half-obliterated black letters on a white painted board.

The whole comfortable discomfort that he had first chafed at—then tolerated—at last learned to call life. For there is no place in the world where the lotus-eater matures more rapidly than in the solitary island shadowed by hills and lapped by tides. Like many another, Prendergast had begun life with

purposes and energies; but the people, the atmosphere, the very soil of the country are alien to such things; the solid wall of influences had prevailed, and his nature had dozed to sleep.

He was still gazing at the notice board, still ruminating pleasantly—the tobacco in his pipe glowing as he drew and let go his breath, when a sound in the deserted street aroused him. A man's laugh—its echo in a girl's voice—then footsteps, partly muffled in the sandy dust of the roadway. He turned abruptly, raised his cap, then drew back a step into his original position, slightly disconcerted for almost the first time in his recollection.

The girl's form was familiar—familiar enough to bring the slow blood to his face—but the man's was new, with the intolerable newness of an unexpected, unreckoned-with thing. He glanced over the slight figure in its spotless flannels, and felt suddenly and hotly conscious of his rough-cut tweeds; then the feeling fled before a fierce pang of self-disgust at his momentary weakness. At this precise moment the two in the roadway paused. The man looked coolly interested, the girl flushed with unwonted exhilaration.

"Good-morning, Dr. Prendergast," she said. "This is Mr. Astley—the friend from London that we expected last night. His boat was kept back by the fog; he arrived from Cloghal only two hours ago."

She spoke a little hurriedly, glancing from one to the other. Strangers were few at Rosscoe and introductions rare.

When she ceased speaking there was a pause. A group of fishermen passed,

carrying nets and lobster pots, and the ducks by the pump scattered in confusion. Prendergast shifted his position awkwardly, the stranger, with absolute unconcern, screwed in his eyeglass and surveyed him as he might an interesting monument.

"How d'you do?" he said.

Prendergast squared his wide shoulders.

"This is a tame spot after London," he remarked. "How does it strike you?"

The other smiled. His smile—like everything from his immaculate Panama to his doeskin boots, was cool and complete; it altered his face just enough to show a perfect row of teeth, but it left his satirical, questioning eyes absolutely untouched.

"The place is interesting," he said, "but it's the people I've come for. I'm rather studying the Celt."

His words dropped out with great conciseness, each syllable cut and clear. Prendergast unconsciously began knocking the ashes out of his smoldering pipe. At this point the girl interposed.

"Mr. Astley is writing a great book," she said; "and he's hunting for uncultivated types. Isn't that it?"

She looked up with naïve admiration at the thin, clean-shaven face.

The last shred of tobacco fell to the ground, and Prendergast raised his head.

"He won't have to look far," he said.

Nancy Odell glanced around quickly. Ill-humor was new in Prendergast.

Astley let his eyeglass drop from his eye; it dangled from its string in the sun.

"No," he said, smoothly, "I've discovered that for myself."

The veiled sarcasm escaped Nancy; but Prendergast, without fully understanding it, flushed.

"Good-by, Miss Odell," he said. "There's work waiting up at my place." He held out his hand.

The girl looked puzzled, then distressed.

"Good-by," she said. "And will you

dine with us to-night? I know father wants you to——"

He hesitated. Her eyes were on his. Astley was lost in contemplation of the dispensary.

"Very well," he agreed, brusquely. "Thanks!" Lifting his cap, he turned on his heel and strode down the street toward his own house.

The newcomer turned, his lips curved into sarcastic amusement.

"Miss Odell," he said, "I owe you an unpayable debt. I thought they had extinguished the primitive man some hundreds of years ago."

II.

Prendergast reviewed many things that evening as he climbed the steep hill to the Odells'. It seemed that chance had taken Rosscoe, its picturesqueness, its lethargy, its negativity, and shaking it rudely had set it down again in altered circumstances.

The sight of this stranger with his cool superiority, his insolence, exhaling another atmosphere in every breath, had altered the very face of accepted things. The World had penetrated into the Wilderness; which in our day is tantamount to the Snake in Paradise.

He threw back his shoulders and quickened his pace; he held his head high, but there were misgivings in his heart. With slow exactness he ticked off events from the hour of his arrival in Rosscoe four years before, beginning with the damp, drizzling day on which he had caught his first glimpse of Nancy Odell, riding up the village on her chestnut cob—a slim girl of seventeen, with the longest and blackest eyelashes he had ever seen, and hair still bound in a dense, thick plait.

He recalled their first meeting and his subsequent invitation to the old house crumbling away under its ivy; and with the memory came his first impression of Nancy's father—Denis Odell, the man who after a brilliant career at college had returned to Rosscoe on his father's death; had taken up

life there; had married; and had gradually, by a process so slow as scarcely to be discernible, passed from the ranks of those who do to the ranks of those who dream.

He remembered everything—the whole chain of pleasant uneventfulness; the days that slipped to nights, the nights that merged to days, while outside—beyond the guarding sea and the wall of hills, life went on as usual, fevered, despairing, hopeful, tireless in its steady round.

He stopped suddenly in his walk. What had he really done in those four years? The question glowered at him abruptly out of the falling dusk; with unaccustomed force it stormed his mind. He had done his duty—had earned his reputation for goodness of heart—had been charitable in his modest way. But what mite of knowledge had he given to the storehouse of his profession? What had he contributed toward the future of his own life?

A great blank met his view—an appalling, yawning space. For two whole years he had been placidly in love. Until to-day the need to put even that love into expression had never touched his mind. He had been content in the silent acknowledgment of the fact. Nancy knew that he cared for her—must know it, he had reasoned, and for the rest—they were young, there was time enough. There was time enough! That had been his philosophy till now. Now somehow everything was changed.

His fingers moved with loose uncertainty as he opened the iron gate, then with a more hasty step than he had used for years, he crossed the wide walk to the house—the gravel crunching under his feet.

In the hall he was met by Odell. The old man looked unusually alert; some of the light that had been in Nancy's eyes that morning seemed to have passed to his.

"You've seen young Astley?" he said, almost at once, linking his arm through Prendergast's and drawing him down the corridor to the drawing-room.

Prendergast answered churlishly in a monosyllable. Though he had ex-

pected the words he resented them now that they were said.

"A clever fellow! A man with a future! It has warmed my heart to see him, Prendergast. His father and I were old friends. Poor Ned! He had a great spirit, but he lacked the grit of this youngster. He belongs to the newer era, eh?"

He laughed with his hand on the drawing-room door, and for the first time Prendergast felt a tinge of alienism in the familiar house. It seemed that the brown walls stared down at him with an unaccustomed air, that there was a new note of criticism in the jar of the turning door handle. Then he moved forward into the lighted room.

The room—so large and so suggestive of faded splendor—was softened by a great glow of candles; there were fresh curtains on the long windows, and the bowls of stock on the ancient grand piano seemed more numerous and more fragrant than usual. He felt each infinitesimal difference as he moved forward and took Nancy's hand.

In Nancy, too, there was a change. Her usual cotton dress was discarded for a muslin the color of her eyes, her beautiful hair was coiled with new care, a long gold chain, the only ornament she possessed, was twisted around her neck. Her youth, her charm, her buoyancy struck Prendergast with a shock. He turned abruptly to where the other guest stood.

Astley came forward, and they shook hands. In dark clothes he looked even slighter of build and paler of face—the coldness of his eyes alone defying all changes of attire and alterations of light. His fingers pressed Prendergast's swiftly, then relaxed. They left the impression of steel—so firm and so lacking in all warmth was their touch.

"Miss Odell and I have been discussing temperaments," he said, suavely. "I hold that reaction is the keynote of the Celtic nature, that the more lethargic it seems, the more volcanic its outbreak when the climax comes."

He stopped and adjusted his eyeglass.

Prendergast felt his blood stir at the cool inquisitiveness of the stare, but he controlled the emotion.

"Such topics are beyond Roscoe," he said. "Here, the climax comes first and we talk about it afterward."

Astley inclined his head to one side and surveyed him attentively.

"Then you never self-analyze?"

"Never!" rose emphatically to Prendergast's lips, but his host interposed.

"Dinner awaits us," he said. "We go in without ceremony, Astley—Dr. Prendergast knows that."

Prendergast straightened himself, drawing back against the piano to let Nancy pass; but Astley moved slightly forward, and held the door ajar for her. He was rewarded with a very sweet smile as she passed into the hall.

That dinner lingered long in Prendergast's mind. Astley—superlatively interesting in ordinary moments—seemed to develop a fresh side when partaking of a meal. Where the rural mind grows dull, his galvanized. He talked much and talked well.

Prendergast sat silent and oppressed while the Englishman touched on current literature, lingered over Socialism in its last developments, and rounded neatly off with a personal view on European politics. He watched Odell's absorbed face and Nancy's mystified admiration; then steadily enough his gaze moved on to the mirror hanging on the opposite wall and paused on his own reflection.

The picture it rested on was not calculated to reassure. The eyes that met his own lacked color, the skin had an uncertain tone, the sandy hair refused to lie flat; lowering his glance, he arrested it once more, this time on the ill-knotted tie and badly fitting coat. How many times, he wondered, had he sat in that same seat and viewed that same image with no glimmering of shame, while he criticised the new schoolmaster or discussed the prospects of the potato crop! At the thought he set his teeth.

Twice Astley appealed to him, but his ideas were glued together, and his

answers were wide of the point; more than twice his host tried to draw him into talk, but the geniality sounded like contempt to his over-strained ears and he responded ungraciously. His emphatic sense of failure hardened into pride.

He thought savagely of the degrees he had taken, of the hours he had sweated, of the whole up-hill fight—with little money and few friends, that had landed him where he was. As the thoughts came, quick and bitter, the servant entered with coffee, liquors, whiskey and hot water. With an impulse new in its directness, he pushed back his chair and rose. To the three surprised faces turned toward him his expression seemed unchanged; to himself it felt convulsed and strange.

"Miss Odell," he said, "you mustn't mind if I say good-night. There's a poor woman on the cliff who wants seeing to. Old Mary Troy, sir—" He turned to his host. "She's not long for this world, and I promised I'd look in before the night was out."

Odell looked up.

"Tush, man! It's the old story. They're always going and never gone. Sit down and have a glass of punch."

His tone was cordial, but Prendergast saw his eyes turn back expectantly to Astley's face.

"Thanks, sir, but it's a true bill this time. Good-night!" He nodded to Astley. "Good-night, Miss Odell!" His eyes rested on Nancy's face, and his hand sought hers!

She pressed his fingers warmly, but her smile was preoccupied, her attention also was elsewhere. It was a curious fact that, of the three faces, the one turned most steadfastly in his direction, the one to show the most interest in his movements, most attention to his words, was that of his fellow-guest.

"Good-night," Nancy said, quickly. "Though you don't deserve even that. But if you must go, tell Mary I'll come and see her to-morrow before twelve. I ought really to have gone to-day."

"All right. Good-night!"

Odell followed him to the hall and helped him into his overcoat. As he

rolled up the collar, Astley's succinct voice reached them from the dining-room.

"So you are Lady Bountiful? You make me wish I had an interesting disease and a cabin on the cliff."

Odell laughed; by an immense effort Prendergast echoed the sound, then, shaking hands hurriedly, he opened the door with a wrench and passed out into the chill quiet.

Leaving the grounds, he turned—not upwards toward Mary Troy's cottage, but downward, steadily and directly to the sea. Deception in any form was foreign to him, but the moment had come when he must have a new atmosphere.

Leaving the road he gained the rocks by a footpath and crossing them with steady, accustomed feet, paused on the outer edge, took off his cap, and let the air blow strongly through his rough hair. Outwardly he was calm and dogged; so also, by a strange affinity, was the mass of water at his feet. The oily sheen of autumn was over the black waves, as they sucked and murmured in sullen quiet. The primary elements of his nature dumbly understood the restrained power and answered to it.

He stood for ten minutes, breathing in the moist, salt air; then he turned and slowly retraced his steps. As he regained the road he stopped.

"I'll tell her to-morrow," he said, aloud. "It won't wait another day."

III.

But man proposes. Next day an urgent message called him to the boundary of his district—over the worst roads in the county, and night was falling before he reached home; the following day a fresh obstacle arose, and on the third another. A week passed and he had not yet seen Nancy alone.

To a more impetuous nature the delay would have been insupportable; in Prendergast it called up the dogged fatalism that lay deep in his character, and something of his old philosophy arose again reassuringly. There was

time enough! Men like Astley might flit across the horizon of Rosscoe—disturbing its elements, but in due season they must inevitably flit away again and be forgotten. He stated this to himself on the seventh night after the dinner, as he sat in his lonely room by the light of his solitary lamp, and he reiterated it in the sunlight of the next morning, as he unpacked a chest of drugs brought by post, and laid the contents on the window sill of the dispensary—to await sorting.

The philosophy was still in his mind as he sauntered across the cliff later in the day—his gun on his shoulder, his dog at his heels. His eyes were on the heather in front of him, his battered brown pipe was well aglow when he paused in the midst of his meditation, arrested by a voice behind him.

"Hello, doctor! Where are you off to? Haven't seen you these hundred years."

It was the voice of Denis Odell; and, turning, Prendergast saw him emerge from one of the narrower tracks into the wide path that encircled the cliff. He looked brisk and healthy, there was a new spirit in his voice.

"Had any luck?" he asked. "We heard you banging away."

"Nothing to talk about." Prendergast spoke absently; he was speculating on the change in his companion. In all the years of their acquaintance he had never known Odell to leave his room—much less his house, before afternoon.

The other saw his thought. "You're wondering—" he said. "It's the touch of the world that's done it. Why did none of you here ever tell me I was vegetating? I'd have mouldered into the graveyard ten years before my time, if Astley hadn't turned up to rejuvenate me. He's like one of your tonics, Prendergast—bitter to taste, but powerful in results." He laughed.

Prendergast shifted his gun uneasily. "You've been showing him the caves?" He nodded toward the track Odell had just ascended.

"Yes. The three of us have been exploring, and I've beaten the two of them

in the climb back. Not bad for a dried-up recluse, eh?" He laughed again.

"No," Prendergast shifted his position and whistled to the dog. He knew that he himself could scarcely have outstripped Nancy in the ascending of a cliff had she cared to reach the summit first, and at the thought, the first fully comprehended pang of jealousy shot over his senses. But instantly he shook it off. What had this stranger to do with Rosscoe—or life at Rosscoe? Nothing. He moved once more impatiently and the dog stirred.

"Down, Rose! Quiet, old girl!" He looked uneasily toward the side path. The thought of Nancy and the stranger alone on the brown, rocky track filled him with ungovernable thoughts. Then suddenly his mood changed and lightened; his faith flowed back.

"I hear them!" he exclaimed. "They're coming! This is a new experience for Mr. Astley." He laughed with a great reaction; there had been a terrible moment, but the moment was passed. He went forward quickly and looked over the cliff.

Nancy came first, her blue eyes alight, her hair blown about her temples; she walked over the boulders and loose earth of the track with the erect ease she would have shown on a level road; a pace or two behind came Astley, his pale face a shade or two paler than usual, his thin lips apart. The girl was the first to see Prendergast; she blushed quickly and then smiled.

"Dr. Prendergast!" she exclaimed. "Where in the world have you been hiding yourself all this time?" The words were slight, the tone hurried, but they were sufficient to bring the blood in a slow tide to Prendergast's face. Unconsciously he raised his head, and met Astley's amused, sarcastic gaze.

"I have been working," he said.

Nancy gained the path and her companion followed. As he reached Prendergast's side he raised his eyebrows.

"Does anybody ever work in Ireland?" he asked, innocently, disentangling his eyeglass string.

Odell laughed.

"Look out, Astley!" he called. "I'd

have broken your father's head for that thirty years ago. Come here, little girl," he added, "and give me an arm home. That climb was pretty stiff, after all."

Astley and Prendergast drew back, and Nancy went forward, patting the dog's head as she passed. Odell took her arm affectionately and they turned toward home.

The two men, left alone, stood silent and uncertain. A second passed, then another; at last Astley broke the pause.

"Where there's no alternative, doctor," he said, "it's best to philosophize. Will you walk home with me?"

The delay that followed was acute in its suggestion. Prendergast kicked at a tuft of heather, then looked down in deep contemplation at his boot; Astley, his head inclined to the left, his eyes gleaming with sarcastic query, watched him with steady attention. The thought in each mind was visible—in the one, keen, unemotional interest; in the other, active distrust. The position was slightly ludicrous. Astley laughed.

"Come," he said, "we each have our point of view. I am superlatively irritating in your eyes; you are superlatively interesting in mine. Now, your profession is one of philanthropy. Will you walk back with me?"

The tone stung Prendergast, but the words amused him. His humor, lifeless for a week, aroused itself and he echoed the other's laugh.

"Just as you like," he acceded. "I suppose I am a bit churlish; we get like that from being alone."

Astley took the apology in wise silence, and they moved forward toward the bend around which Nancy and her father had disappeared.

They walked slowly; it was a day to be lazily enjoyed. The cliff was splendid in its fading heather, the wide sweep of sea shimmered copper rather than gold; everywhere lay the colors and the peace of an autumn afternoon. Prendergast eyed it placidly in the calm appreciation that time and custom bring; Astley, after one cursory glance,

took no further notice of the scene, but fixed his whole, concentrated interest on the man by his side. He looked as the entomologist looks when he pins a new and rare moth to his setting board.

Looking back upon that walk, Prendergast could never remember precisely what they talked about. He had a certain after-impression that Astley had been even more brilliant and more individual than on the night of the dinner; that slowly and by reluctant degrees his own innate dislike and distrust of the man had thawed before his caustic charm, till he had been drawn to discuss his life, his work—even his sentiments.

That was his impression; but his impression seen in the clearness of after-knowledge is like a phantom light in presence of the sun—a poor, untraceable thing, without color or form. His first clear recollection dated from their pause at the point where the cliff track stopped and the road began. Far away in the distance the figures of Nancy and her father were just discernible, heading steadily for home; above them, the corn fields rolled away—yellow and cropped and cleared of their treasure; below was the village, the rocks and the strand. The spot invited rest; Astley was the first to stop. Screwing in his eyeglass, he turned sharply on his companion and surveyed him deliberately with the old look that so aroused antagonism.

"This visit to Ireland has meant a good deal to me," he said.

The tone he used was peculiar—so peculiar that Prendergast lifted his head. In an instant the partial softening of his feelings was arrested, he drew back into himself—once more watchful, suspicious, ill-at-ease.

"What do you mean?" he asked. The art of polite preamble was unknown to him.

For a moment Astley made no answer; he looked across the bay to where the second headland showed shadowy in the haze; then he looked slowly and deliberately back at Prendergast.

"I mean that Miss Odell has promised to be my wife," he said.

IV.

It was many hours later that Prendergast unlocked the door of the dispensary and, leaving it ajar, walked upstairs. He walked slowly and heavily—the toes of his boots stumbling methodically against each uncarpeted step, the sleeve of his coat rubbing against the whitewashed wall.

Entering the bare consulting-room, he paused; his gun hung from his hand, the dog, a yard behind him, stood attentive and surprised. For several seconds he stayed immovable, then stirred by some untraceable thought, he lifted the gun, looked at it and laid it aside. Taking off his cap, he passed his hand slowly and perplexedly across his hair.

How he had parted with Astley, what he had said, how he had borne himself, belonged to some vague, long-passed time. He had a shadowy memory of a cold, concise voice and of cold, amused, intensely inquisitive eyes; then came a knowledge of escape and a recollection of walking; walking on and on without sense of distance or destination, in a fruitless attempt to outstrip himself. With the remembrance of his walk he looked quickly down at his boots caked with red mud; then with the dazed, vacant look still on his face he crossed the room to the window overlooking the street.

On the window sill stood the packing case, the strewn shavings, the phials and boxes of varying size. He looked at them stolidly, with difficulty connecting them with himself. Each one had been given its place that morning by a man in the strong confidence of life, each was glanced over now by a man who had lost the very bearings of existence. Once more he passed his hand heavily over his hair.

To emphasize his feelings in that hour would be impossible—he had none to emphasize. Neither rage nor loss nor desolation held any part in his comprehension. He was merely stunned.

For well over ten minutes he kept the same position—his hands hanging by his side, his eyes fastened unseeingly on the litter before him; then swiftly, by

one of those tiny incidents that change events, he was brought back to movement. The dog, lying under the table, stirred in its sleep, stretched its paws shiveringly and yelped; the sound so familiar, so commonplace, aroused him.

"Wake up, Rose!" he said, unconsciously. "Wake up, old girl!"

The sound of his voice in the still room was hollow; the dog sprang up, twisted its body, yawned and came forward, wagging its tail. A second later it thrust its nose amongst the debris of the window sill—sending one small bottle rolling to the ground.

Prendergast stooped and recovered it. It was a narrow bottle neatly packed with fine white grains and bearing a significant label; as he drew himself upright again he held it to the light—his face grimly relaxed.

"One pinch of this, Rose," he said, "and——" But he didn't finish. With a sound half fierce, half ironical, he broke off sharply, and, holding the bottle between his fingers, walked the length of the room. Three times he paced from end to end, then pausing, he laid it aside in his ordinary drug cupboard and continued his promenade with empty hands.

He walked persistently for three minutes, as a prisoner might tramp a gaol yard; then once more he paused, surprised into quiet by a fresh sound—the sound of steps on the carpetless stairs outside. With a first impulse he turned to annihilate the intruder, then something in the steps themselves—something in the soft, considered mounting, held him mute. The dog walked to the door and growled; the growl steadied him.

"Down, Rose!" he said, roughly, and moving past the animal he threw the door wide.

In the passage the pale face of Astley accosted him sharply through the dust. He drew back, and his visitor made a step forward—the light of question still flickered in his eyes, his lips looked slightly white.

"I rather thought of consulting you professionally," he began; "and finding the door open, I came up. Have I

transgressed?" He laughed, but his cold voice was more alert than usual, his words more clipped.

In silence Prendergast drew back into the room.

The other still halted on the threshold.

"Have I transgressed?" he asked again.

"You may come in." Prendergast forced the monosyllables. At the first sound of the chilling voice his whole mental mechanism had undergone a change. As a cold douche sends the blood tingling, the first word uttered by Astley had slashed his lethargy into bits. All the silent antipathy that existed from the first, all the new, intolerable sense of wrong that lay dormant in his mind, flooded up and met.

At school he had earned the reputation of being hard to arouse; as he stood now by the deal table, conscious in every pore of Astley's presence, he remembered a strange linking of ideas one memorable day in that same school life on which he had, single-handed, fought and conquered three boys of his own size. At the recollection he crossed the room rapidly and stood once more by the window, looking down into the deserted street.

Silently Astley moved forward, and in his turn also paused by the table.

"The fact is," he began, "my nerves gave me a bad time this morning, and have left the legacy of a splitting head. It struck me to come to you for relief." As he spoke he leaned forward; the light from the small windows was growing momentarily duller. A September evening falls rapidly once the sun had dropped.

"A headache?" Prendergast said the word dully; he was aware, in a strange, uncertain way of a tightness—a sense of congestion, in his own brain. "A headache?" he said again.

"Yes; a headache."

The words reached him, but their meaning left him untouched. Without definite object he walked back into the room and, passing Astley, paused once more by the cupboard in the wall. His hand strayed to the door hinge and

fumbled there; the motion was unconscious, but it raised a new query in his visitor's attentive eyes.

He left his place by the table and drew closer to Prendergast by two steps.

"Make me a dose," he urged; "you have the materials under your hand." His voice was at all times distinct, when he choose he could make it vibrate like a bell. As he spoke now he used all his power, and in direct and violent response a change passed over Prendergast. He lifted his head, straightened his shoulders, and once more passed his hand across his hair.

By some inexplicable force the blood that had seemed massed in his brain rushed darkly over his face—roaring in his ears, dancing before his eyes. He had been moving, living, talking in a dream, now abruptly he was awake, conscious of himself and of his loss, with a consciousness that ran direct, without off-shoot or divergence, into one channel—the channel of violent, jealous hate.

In that instant of enlightenment every impulse and every feeling concentrated to a point, he understood everything from the first moment his eyes had rested on Astley to the present hour; each item, each incident, each idea turned on the same pivot—jealousy. Jealousy! On the spur of the thought he half turned, his hand clenched; then, with a motive altogether novel, he paused on his impulse and slowly—quite slowly, turned back, facing the cupboard once again. Astley's words seemed to hop in material form between the bottles, to wink and leer at him from the shelves.

"Make me a dose, you have the materials under your hand!" Harshly, smoothly, suggestively—in every varying note they were shouted and whispered in his mind.

"What do you mostly take?" he asked. The question came steadily enough, but it didn't seem that the voice that spoke them belonged to him.

Astley came forward another step.

"Oh, anything—antipyrine or the other stuff—anything you like." He,

too, seemed slightly and unaccountably perturbed, but the perturbation escaped Prendergast. Such a man in such a moment is oblivious of everything but his own dominant thought.

His face had a gray pallor, his hand fumbled continuously with the hinge.

"Heart sound?" he asked, without turning around.

For an instant Astley made no reply, then he laughed with deliberate, sarcastic point.

"My dear doctor, what a question to a man in my position! Surely Miss Odell is the authority there." The words were light, but they were meant to cut and they fulfilled their mission.

Prendergast made no remark. For a complete minute he remained absolutely motionless, absolutely mute; then picking up a wineglass he carried it across the room, half filled it with water and returned to the cupboard and his former place. His face still had the leaden tinge, his eyes were fixed; without a glance at Astley he leaned forward—his wide shoulders robbing the cupboard of light. With jerking fingers he uncorked a bottle, measured a pinch of white power and spilled it into the glass; then, having added two other ingredients, he turned around.

His face was expressionless and without movement save for the throbbing of a nerve at the corner of his mouth—a curious vehicle of feeling that answered to no control. Without a word he held the glass at arm's length.

The light in the room was failing. Astley, with slightly nervous haste and head inquisitively thrust forward, moved to his side.

"This is the dose?" he asked, his hand half extended, his eyes bright with question and surmise.

Prendergast saw each detail and his innate physical loathing of the man arose overwhelmingly.

"Yes; this is the dose," he said, in a clogged voice and, thrusting the glass into Astley's hand, he walked to the window and stood looking out.

All men have their dark, their terrible hour—to be lived through, struggled through, crawled through, as the case

may be. How long Prendergast stood by the window and stared through the dusty panes matters not at all; whether a moment or a lifetime the issues were the same.

He stood while the savage tide of his jealousy leaped up in fire and fell back to water—running in trickling sweat down his forehead from his hair. Then at last he turned. All life seemed gone from his face, and he stooped like one who has passed through great physical exhaustion, but the strained look had left his eyes. Whatever his fight had been, it was fought through.

The room seemed very dim as he turned, but the glint of the glass, as his patient raised it slowly, caught his eye as lightning might have done. He sprang forward; the dog made a frightened sound—half bark, half cry; Astley stepped backward, overturning a chair. For a bare instant all was confusion; then Prendergast drew back against the wall and wiped his face. The dog had run to him and was fawning on his feet; Astley, with a colorless face and a smile on his thin lips, was twisting and re-twisting his eyeglass string; between them on the ground lay the shattered fragments of the wineglass, its spilled contents running in a thin stream across the boards.

That night Prendergast never went home, but when, worn and exhausted, he let himself into his house next morning at six o'clock the first object that met his glance was a propped-up letter on the hall table. It was a thick letter in a square envelope, addressed in an unfamiliar hand.

He had entered the house with inert

movements. With the same inertness he picked up the envelope and tore it apart. It bore the date of seven o'clock on the previous evening—exactly half an hour after the moment at which he had watched Astley pass down the dispensary stairs.

He scanned the first lines dully; then a change passed over his face—the dark tide of blood that suffused his skin in emotion swept over it, he turned with unsteady fingers to the signature, then returned to the first page and read the letter to the end. It was carefully and concisely worded—the writing distinct and small.

"My dear doctor," it began. "I am your debtor under two heads—I owe you my apologies and my thanks. I came to your village with a purpose and a theory; by your unconscious help I leave it to-morrow with the first fulfilled and the second verified.

"In short, I came here to find you the quiet lethargic hero of a very promising comedy, and having a turn for human theatricals, I conceived the idea of playing scenshifter and audience in one—of providing a climax and watching the lethargic hero live through it.

"From your point of view the act was unwarrantable; but, as I once explained to you, a point of view is a very prejudiced affair at best, and when all is reckoned up no solid harm has been achieved.

"I have gained an insight into the Celtic character by a means no more genuine than your dose of—shall we say antipyrine? And for the rest, Miss Odell is entirely charming, but such pleasant pastimes as love and marriage lie in more worthy—or should it be more suitable—hands than mine.

"Yours faithfully,

"JAMES ASTLEY."

Prendergast read the letter to the end word by word; then slowly, dazedly, unbelievably, he turned back to the beginning and read it through again.



THE JEALOUS MRS. JEFFREYS

By James Forbes

"GOOD-night."

"Good-night."

"Odd that we should be the only women in this coach."

"I feared before your advent this morning that I would have the uncovered distinction of being 'the only skirt aboard' as the man in lower eight—the one with the apoplectic neck—expressed it."

"Awful to be a lone woman in a crowd of men."

"Yes. When you can't select the crowd."

"Fancy a Chicago-to-New York *tête-à-tête* with lower eight."

"Oh, my dear, 'forget it.' The thought is enough to give one nightmare. Well, good-night. Will I see you at breakfast? It's a meal I invariably miss while traveling. But with only two of us, I fancy there's some chance of making one's toilet before luncheon."

"Some women are very tedious over their hair."

"Poor things, I sympathize with them. It's the 'Lady Calciminers' who get on my nerves. The railroad company should post a placard: 'Women passengers wishing to make-up before breakfast must leave an early call.'"

"It's a horrid vulgarity. I would as soon contemplate wearing a diamond collar with a touring frock."

"Thank Heaven, what little complexion I have is 'mine own.'"

"Well, good-night."

"Good-night."

"Isn't it a shame that you have an upper berth?"

"When I protested, the ticket man ex-

plained that 'travel to the East was heavy.'"

"Two fat men to every section."

"Imagine my relief to-day when I spied your feather waving defiance to all the derbies."

"I could have hugged you when I saw you following in the wake of the porter."

"Why didn't you? I would have understood."

"While I don't believe in being stiff or offish when I travel, still it would not do to be too emotional at first sight."

"Proximity in a Pullman necessarily breaks the ice of conventionality."

"You took some time to thaw out. I was really afraid that you were going to be—"

"Snippy?"

"No. Snubby."

"That isn't kind. Haven't we been talking as freely as though we had known each other for years, instead of hours?"

"And keeping the other passengers awake. Good-night."

"Good-night."

"I am so glad that you are going through to New York."

"The pleasure is mutual."

"However will you manage the ladder?"

"Easily—ouch!"

"You've hurt yourself—oh, dear—I am so sorry."

"It's nothing really. Good-night."

"Good-night."

"It's awfully good of you to bring me this tea. I simply couldn't go in. You've really had your own breakfast?"

"Certainly. My digestion wasn't upset by being tossed about. An upper berth must be a chamber of horrors. Have some more tea?"

"It's very grateful. Oh, I've had such a wretched night."

"Of course you have. Try to eat a crumb of toast, and please don't look so miserable. It worries me."

"This toast is so crisp. You're *sure* you've eaten?"

"Must I summon the conductor, and the waiter to convince you, Mrs. Doubting Thomas? Have another slice and just a drop more tea. No? What are you fretting about? Leaving Chicago?"

"Chicago! I hate it."

"So do I, not the place, but because the dearest thing to me is no longer there."

"What was the dearest to me *is*!"

"The tense has everything to do with it. New York holds both present and future for me."

"I feel as though I were going into the past. I was born in New York—and my mother is there."

"Are you going back for a visit?"

"No, a divorce."

"Heavens! Give *me* a cup of tea."

"Did I shock you?"

"Slightly. I am going to buy my trousseau, and my second one at that."

"I admire your courage."

"It's you who have admirable courage."

"I don't understand."

"To face a life of single—well, not blessedness."

"I managed to endure it until a few years ago."

"What made it then unendurable?"

"Curiosity provoked by propinquity—perhaps—"

"Love, perhaps?"

"I prefer to think it was esteem."

"You wish to consider him overestimated instead of overloved."

"That point of view is less humiliating."

"You have been thinking about it a little too much—possibly you wouldn't have decided on this step if you had felt more."

"My heart grew tired——"

"And your brain stepped in?"

"Even the feminine brain has some logic, and logic left no course but this."

"Logic leads to law."

"And—you're thinking law will lead to loneliness?"

"I fear you will find it so. Pardon me—I must appear most intrusive."

"I invited the discussion. In fact it's refreshing to see the situation from another point of view. I have looked at it so long through one pair of spectacles."

"And aren't they a little tear-blurred this morning?"

"I am a little unhappy. Were you never unhappy—the first time?"

"Of course I was. But, if the future brings me as much happiness I will be content."

"Were you lonely—after?"

"Terribly so. I traveled. Tired, I went home, but—one doesn't fit in as formerly—there is an intangible change. When I discovered the fault was in me and not in them I tried living alone. But I was a sad failure in my attempt to emulate the lady bachelor. My old friends were glad to see me—but they were all happily married. Have you noticed how the man and woman congenially mated find happiness only in association with others equally so?"

"And how quickly mismated Mr. Jones discovered the unhappiness of neglected Mrs. Smith——"

"So—you've found that out!"

"Do go on—you don't mind *my* being curious?"

"Oh! it gives me the shivers to think about it. I don't want to spoil to-day by recalling yesterday. I've shown you the picture of a widow!"

"And a divorcée?"

"She is all that—and much more!"

"I suppose she has less of a chance should she wish to be—foolish—again."

"Naturally, men look upon her as a risk."

"I suppose they say to themselves, 'It takes two to make a quarrel.'"

"Usually three."

"Please don't misjudge my case. Number *three* was a woman!"

"I know that."

"How?"

"You betrayed yourself. You are bitter. Cynicism is the refuge of the proud women, broken-hearted."

"Broken-hearted? I protest—outraged, yes—even disgusted—"

"Perhaps a little jealous?"

"Emphatically so."

"Was the cause flagrant?"

"Oh, no. Nothing vulgar or commonplace. Not even usual—I was jealous of his interest. Can you understand?"

"Perfectly. I myself could more easily forgive a man for a momentary yielding to physical impulse than condone any wavering of his attention, any lessening of the importance I once assumed in his life."

"He had always been trustworthy until last summer—"

"What sort of a woman was she?"

"She had left the hotel when I rejoined him. I had only his word for her attractiveness."

"Pretty?"

"I fancy not. Sympathetic."

"Much worse!"

"Decidedly."

"Married?"

"She said 'a widow.'"

"What did the other women say?"

"That she was 'so sweet,' 'so oddly pretty,' 'such style' and 'such fun.'"

"Evidently she hadn't bothered about their husbands."

"They took pains to tell me how lonely my husband *had* been—how he *had* missed me."

"With that emphasis?"

"Precisely."

"Rather ambiguous."

"Well, I decided that the remark was applicable only to the first week of my absence."

"What did he say?"

"He *had* been so lonely!"

"Where did *he* place the emphasis?"

"I was too angry to care. Every one had 'been so kind,' particularly Mrs. — Heavens! I must not mention her name! That would be caddish."

"I wouldn't have heard it if you had, and you haven't."

"Where was I?"

"Every one had been so kind, particularly Mrs. —"

"Oh! yes. They had discovered mutual—"

"Affinities?"

"He said 'friends'—she was the most amusing companion—and was so anxious to meet me. Can't you just see her?"

"I know her kind so well."

"I flatly refused to receive her."

"What did he do?"

"Laughed at me. Accused me of being jealous. I was. But it was horribly conceited in him to know it. We quarreled about—"

"About everything. I know—you began about her—"

"And woke up to find myself shedding tears because he liked the way she did up her back hair!"

"Now it's all over and you are going back to your mother. Terrible! Does she expect you?"

"No, I'll wire from Philadelphia."

"Oh! you decided suddenly."

"No one knows. I 'saw to' his linen, ordered the things he likes for dinner, told his man that I was dining out, and arranged to have my farewell and my —my ultimatum I think they call it—delivered at his club during the evening."

"Consideration is almost a vice with you."

"I dislike to upset people's nerves. There was no more need to spoil his dinner than to frighten mother uselessly. Then, too, there might have been objections."

"It is just possible."

"You see, mother's a dear, but she's old-timey. She read me quite a lecture for leaving him this summer, saying the climatic change in the last twenty years was wonderful, that none but the older women seemed able to endure a summer in town and a solid year of their husband's society."

"Do you know, I like your mother?"

"Women don't, as a rule. She's a bit hard on them. Calls them 'scriptural lilies—they toil not, neither do they spin—the only word they know is spend.'"

"It costs a pretty penny to live up to Solomon's sartorial repute."

"I didn't buy—well, hardly a thing for the trip—and I fated to leave him. So I thought mother was not quite fair. I hadn't been on the other side for ages—not since my honeymoon."

"How *could* you go over the ground again alone?"

"I went with the Wingates—but not to any of our private places. We kept to the beaten track. Mr. Wingate is a jolly sort."

"And Mrs. Wingate?"

"Something of an invalid. But not at all the jealous kind. She didn't mind our doing the things too exciting for her. We had some great larks."

"Did your husband—"

"Oh! I wrote him everything. He was very sweet about them—"

"Were you 'sweet' about his larks?"

"That's very different. I didn't flirt."

"Are you *sure* that he did?"

"Haven't I told you of that woman?"

"You surely wouldn't have had him mope all summer?"

"Certainly not. But when I came home he should have forgotten that any other woman existed."

"Did you blot out 'Win'—the Wingates?"

"After they had listened patiently all summer to 'my husband this' and 'my husband the next thing'? I owed them at least the opportunity of judging whether or no I had overestimated him, I had invited them for October and he wanted me to include her!"

"Possibly he wanted to pay off a similar debt of gratitude to the 'widow.'"

"Nonsense, do you think a woman would tolerate a man's panegyrics of his wife—"

"Yes, if she were similarly situated and separated and the man a sympathetic listener."

"I've never had that experience."

"I have. Robinson Crusoe wasn't a circumstance to a lone husband I met last summer."

"Were you at Mt. Desert Island?"

"No, in a crowded hotel. But he was the loneliest thing—"

"And you were his man Friday?"

"Something of the sort. Oh! what a bore he was about his wife. My dear, that woman from his utterly unbiased standpoint is the eighth wonder!"

"Why did you bother with him?"

"He acted as sort of escape valve for me."

"How?"

"My engagement was a secret—and I found out that he and my *fiancé* had known each other at college."

"Well?"

"I *had* to rave about him to somebody and you can always trust a man. We came to an agreement—we divided the time. I talked for fifteen minutes about Bob—then he talked for twenty about her!"

"And the hotel talked all the time about both of you?"

"Oh! dear no. Every one knows he can't see any woman but his wife. They all felt so sorry for Tom, but they didn't dare be especially nice to him. I didn't meet her as I left before she arrived. But I imagine they had some fun at her expense, when she did appear on the scene."

"How?"

"About Tom's attentions to me. Oh, they say she's awful! Mrs. Armitage nicknamed her 'The Jealous Mrs. Jeffreys.'"

"Did Flora Armitage do that?"

"Flora Armitage! Do you know her?"

"Rather—I'm the jealous Mrs. Jeffreys!"

"Oh—I—I—am so sorry!"

"Why—you—then *you're* Tom's Sally Tyler. Oh! what a fool I've been!"

"You have. He adores you."

"What shall I do?"

"Go back."

"I can't."

"You must."

"I'd look such a fool, and besides, when could I get a train for the West?"

"Porter give me a time-table—let me see—Pittsburg. No, we've passed that. What's that other burg?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, here it is. Harrisburg. You can leave there at ten minutes of three

and be in Chicago to-morrow morning.
Porter, give me a telegraph blank."

"What are you going to do?"

"Wire Tom to meet you."

"Do you think he would?"

"He's dying to—if I know him, and I think I do."

"I'd rather explain about it at home."

"All right, maybe you do know him a little better. What will I say?"

"Dear, dear Tom!"

"Dear, dear Tom!" This isn't a letter, goose!"

"I forgot. Say:

"MR. THOMAS JEFFREYS,
415 Century Building, Chicago.
I'll be home to breakfast. KATE."

"Better make it 'lovingly, Kittie.'"



THE DILETTANTE

TO lie outright in the light of day
I'm not sufficiently skilful,
But I practice a bit, in an amateur way,
The lie which is hardly wilful;
The society lie and the business lie
And the lie I have had to double,
And the lie that I lie when I don't know why
And the truth is too much trouble.
For this I am willing to take your blame
Unless you have sometimes done the same.

To be a fool of an A1 brand
I'm not sufficiently clever,
But I often have tried my 'prentice hand
In a callow and crude endeavor;
A fool with the money for which I've toiled,
A fool with the word I've spoken,
And the foolish fool who is fooled and foiled
On a maiden's finger broken.
If you never yourself have made a slip,
I'm willing to watch you curl your lip.

Yet down to my toe nails I resist
If you dub me fool and liar,
I set my teeth and double my fist
And my brow is flushed with fire.
You I deny and you I defy
And I vow I will make you rue it;
And I lie when I say that I never lie
Which proves me a fool to do it!
You may jerk your thumb at me and grin
If liar and fool you never have been.

EDMUND VANCE COOKE.

THE HOSTESS, PAST AND PRESENT

By Geraldine Bonner

IT was Byron who described society as two polished hordes, one of them the bores, the other the bored.

But that was more than three-quarters of a century ago, and between then and now, society has passed through divers phases.

To-day no one has time to bore or be bored. The social world is composed of the rushed and the rushers, of people offering entertainment and food to people who snatch both as they pass, making, *en route*, a hurried note of the fact that they must be returned in kind. Nobody has leisure to cultivate the indolent attitude necessary to be the bore or to endure the boring. Nobody has leisure to listen—that great art which was Madame Récamier's crowning attraction and has been the inexplicable, mysterious fascination of many other queens of hearts.

Hospitality as a matter of reposeful entertainment, as a means of encouraging stimulating conversation, of gathering and combining congenial elements, has become, in this section of the country at least, a memory and a dream. The solicitous selecting of guests who can cast a luster on the occasion by the distinction of their minds, the quality of their conversation, and the elegance of their manners, is no longer the main duty of the hostess. No one has time to admire the minds, listen to the conversation, or acquire the manners. The gradual accumulation of particles attracted by a central figure into a brilliant and finally famous coterie, is a phase in our social life that is past.

And why has it passed? Why have we no drawing-rooms which are noted

as gathering places of the men and women most worth while knowing in the community? Why have we no longer hostesses who are the presiding queens of *salons* that stand out from the mass as bright places of inspiration and charm?

There have been such hostesses in the past. We all have heard of Dolly Madison—a little made up, and wearing raiment so splendid that democratic Washington opened its eyes—turning the White House receptions into the most notable functions ever held in that respected mansion. We have had glimpses in our reading of the tea parties that Mrs. Alexander Hamilton and Lady Kitty Duer and the fascinating Madame Jumel held on their days. Even Martha Washington, who was not of the sympathetic, socially adroit type that becomes a ruling force in society, has left the mark of a quiet distinction upon the at-home days she inaugurated, where, though the fare was plum cake and tea, the talk was sparkling and the company was of the best.

The passing of the hostess who practiced an exclusive hospitality where each unit had its own value and its own place, has come about with the making and the spending of enormous fortunes.

With startling quickness entertaining has changed from the cosily choice and intimate assembling of a picked group, to the herding together of large numbers. That intelligent French axiom that a dinner should never be less than the Graces or more than the Muses, has been forgotten. Masses of well-dressed people are rounded up, fed and dis-

persed. Some of them do not know the person who feeds them, and most of them do not care about her. She herself is swamped in the magnitude of her enterprise. She is merely an appendage, whose function it is to stand at the top of the room and shake hands.

Her prestige and power as a potent social force has gone from her. She simply represents a house where the world can go, and eat, and dance, and hear music. She no longer reigns as a woman whose uniquely winning and tactful personality has attracted all that is best worth attracting to her fireside. She is only a medium of entertainment—a sort of exclusive, feminine Barnum who goes to a good deal of trouble and expense for the purpose of being invited into the houses of other exclusive, feminine Barnums. But as a hostess—a ruling, guiding, governing factor in the gayety of the city's upper currents—she is a nullity. No particular personal distinction attaches to her. She is not celebrated for her wit, for her cultivation, for the gracious charm of her address. What the world knows her for is that her dining-room can seat so many people at the same time, that her *chef* receives a larger salary and invents more new dishes than the *chef* of any other millionaire, and that her jewels are the handsomest in town.

Some time ago, while reading an account of the late Countess of Waldegrave, I was struck with a phrase. The writer had been mentioning the various attributes possessed by this brilliant and cultured woman, which had led to her enjoying a unique position in the great world of London. She was a friend of the best and most famous of her day. Men of world renown were glad to pass an hour in her drawing-room. Women as celebrated for their talents as for their position, were its *habitués*. To be accepted there gave a *cachet* nothing else could impart. And in explaining why this old and no longer beautiful woman had created what alone in London resembled one of the *salons* of the eighteenth century, the writer mentioned the fact that she was "always at home."

Always at home! The phrase illumined like a flash of light the question of the decline of the Hostess.

Think what it means!—To know that when you went to that particular house there was a welcome for you, a personage of mind and sympathy, to listen and talk, suggest and stimulate. That the discouraging *visage de bois* which greets every other caller in New York was never offered to the entering guest. He came in, he found the person he had come to see ready and waiting. In the afternoon he probably had a cup of tea. Some other people—not the fevered, rushing, gabbling crowd of an afternoon reception—dropped in, and there was real conversation, the leisurely delightful conversation of cultured people who have time to think and something to say, with the old peeress, alert of mind, quick of understanding, ready of appreciation, to lead and sustain.

Always at home! The phrase has a fascination, especially with us where no fashionable woman ever is at home.

One cannot include the reception day as being at home. It has become a sort of imitation of the evening party, where the world crowds in, looks at one another's clothes, eats and goes. The hostess talks to nobody except to make her greetings and ask them if they want food. If you are lucky enough to catch her alone for five minutes and ask her what she has been doing, she will invariably respond with a regulation set of remarks: Rushed to death—Out all day—Too tired to speak—Only waiting for Lent when perhaps she can rest a little—If she doesn't she will certainly break down, etc., etc.

Women are the pivot of society. It is the one open field of endeavor where they reign and reign alone. A man has little social power. He is an important factor, for society without the man is flat and unspiced. But he has no governing voice. He is admitted and told to make himself agreeable and this is all he may do. But the woman is queen and rules, and the place from which she rules is her home, her domicile. There her influence begins and from thence it

radiates. If she is a woman of marked social gifts she may become a great influence in the world of wealth and fashion. If she adds to her social gift, adaptability and brain, it may become an influence powerful as a magnet to draw to her what is foremost in mind and position as Lady Waldegrave did.

But she must be sometimes—often—at home. If no one can find her, if she is always scattering her fires over an undefined area like a firefly at dusk, she cannot expect to have the choice ones of the passing throng deflect from their course and fruitlessly ring her doorbell.

We often hear wonder expressed that there has been no *salon*, no house prominent as the meeting place for the mentally and socially elect, in such a city as New York, where the flower of the country's intellect, wealth and ability gathers. Let those who make this remark study the processes of the women who were the guiding spirits of the famous *salons* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and those of the women who now dominate society in the larger American cities. They will find their answer without much difficulty. The French Hostess was rarely out. The American is rarely in.

The great *salons* flourished at the period when women's social prestige had reached its high-water mark. The *Précieuses* had introduced gentleness of manners into domestic life. Boorishness was out of fashion. The French woman with her finely poised social instinct, her delicate shrewdness, her mental acuteness, realized that her hour had come and seized her crown and scepter.

Never before or since has the drawing-room and its presiding deity gained such a climax of importance. The *Fronde* was hatched in the *salons* of the seventeenth century and the Revolution in the *salons* of the eighteenth. The women in these drawing-rooms presiding at tea tables a l'Anglaise, or doing the "purfling" which all the world found suddenly amusing, pulled wires that communicated with the core of empire. They dominated the political and domestic life of their epoch. We talk of the power of our women now, but they

are as children, compared to these smiling ladies, who looked so softly feminine, and were the political sovereigns of an epoch.

Every woman who had a *salon* from the days of the studied elegancies of the Fair Arthénice and the *salon bleu*, to the days when the Girondists met in the humble apartment of a hostess who stitched in a corner constraining herself to a meek silence, had some particular gift which rendered her competent to preside over the group she had assembled. Some were wonderful listeners like Mlle. de Lespinasse, of whom La Harpe said he never knew a woman who had more natural wit, less desire to show it, and more talent in showing to advantage that of others.

There were others whose gift was putting people at their ease, and guiding and inspiring talk. It was such a one as this that Madame Necker had in mind when she likened some women in conversation to "light layers of cotton wool in a box packed with porcelain; we do not pay much attention to them, but if they were taken away everything would be broken."

But one of the great points which gave them their right of queenship over their fellows was that they devoted themselves heart and soul to the forming, building up, sustaining and embellishing of their social position. They lived for it. It was a life work with which nothing was permitted to interfere. To be a dominant figure, the head of a flourishing *salon* was to be anointed with the chrism of worldly success.

And for this end they worked as the French work, quietly, tactfully, diligently, patiently. Madame de Lambert furnished her superb hotel, which still stands on the Isle St. Louis, with an eye to the *salon* she intended to establish. There such members of the world of Paris as had proved their right to enter by demonstrating the superior quality of their minds and elegance of their manners, found open house. Madame de Lambert was not one to slight the work she had undertaken. Dinners, as celebrated for the *menu* as for the company that partook of it, were given

twice a week. D'Argenson speaks of dining there regularly on Wednesdays which was "one of her days."

After the historic quarrel between Madame du Deffand and her companion, the charming and ill-fated Mlle. de Lespinasse, the latter started, modestly and timidly her own little *salon*. For ten years she devoted herself to the work of building it up. In time it became one of the most noted places of its kind in Paris. Contemporaries tell us that one met there "choice men of all orders in the Church, the State, and the Court." Its reigning queen never let any pleasure or business interfere with her attendance upon it. She was at home and received every day, from five till nine. La Harpe, in speaking of her, says "she seldom went to the theatre or into the country, and when she did, all Paris was notified in advance." Thus did this penniless and illegitimate daughter of a noble family establish herself as one of the leading spirits of the brilliant society of a brilliant epoch.

The same devotion to the attracting power of their drawing-rooms marked her older and richer rivals. Madame Geoffrin was at home every evening and gave nightly suppers, besides having two dinner days, Monday for artists, Wednesday for men of letters. Madame du Deffand, even after she had retired to her apartment in the Convent of St. Joseph, continued to dispense an unrelenting hospitality. Horace Walpole described her as old and blind, giving two suppers a week to some of the *esprits forts* whose names were on the lips of all Europe.

In her great days, before her blindness struck her, she had had a small supper every night and a grand one once a week. She had the conviction—shared by many women—that, with all respect to his brain power, man is most readily approached through his stomach. Supper was the fashionable meal in her day, and she once caustically remarked that it was "one of the four ends of man."

There was no question of not being at home among these sovereigns of the

world of wit and learning. It was their business to be at home and they attended to it. Men whose society was worth cultivating were made welcome at all the notable drawing-rooms, from the proudly aristocratic ones such as the Comtesse de Bouffler's at The Temple where the steward served a regular nightly supper to whoever might be there, to the simple and yet powerful one of Madame de Tencin where new literary works were read and the *Philosophes* were frequent guests. The lions of the day dropped in upon such gatherings as men do now into clubs. A man who was clever enough to be universally received, could take almost all his meals, and spend his entire days in the finest society that Europe then offered.

Most of them, however, identified themselves with one or two favorite houses. D'Alembert, who for years had spent his mornings with Mlle. de Lespinasse and his evenings with Madame Geoffrin, exclaimed when death had robbed him of both:

"Alas, I have neither mornings nor evenings left!"

He was also an *habitué* of the *salon* of Madame de Tencin, who was his mother, and who, when he became famous, wanted him to desert the humble foster parents who had brought him up and come to her. Voltaire was fond of the aristocratic *salons*. Madame du Deffand's was one of his favorites. Diderot, on the other hand, went there but once, surveyed the epicurean company with an unfriendly eye, and never came again. He liked a freer air, a less delicate standard of manners, which he found in the Bohemian circle that clustered around Madame d'Épinay.

For such men as these, the *femmes d'esprits* strove together. For every celebrity who rallied to her banner, the reigning divinity rejoiced. It was the discovery that Mlle. de Lespinasse was secretly entertaining the choice spirits of her circle that caused the rupture between her and Madame du Deffand. When the elder woman heard of the death of her old companion, her comment was:

"If she had died fifteen years earlier I should not have lost D'Alembert."

When Madame de Tencin was dying Madame Geoffrin came many times to see her.

"Do you know why La Geoffrin comes here?" said the dying *chanoinesse* with a flicker of her old malicious humor. "It is to see what she can gather from my inventory."

To keep their lions safe and in good temper these hard working hostesses tried many little ruses. There was undoubtedly a good deal of subtle flattery dispensed along with the dainty suppers and the sparkling talk. Nothing was too much trouble. It was a distinction to have a celebrated man quartered in the house as a perpetual guest. Marmontel lived ten years at Madame Geoffrin's. D'Alembert lived at Mlle. de Lespinasse's until her death. When Fontenelle, who existed to his hundredth year, and never permitted himself any violent emotion, heard of the death of Madame de Tencin, he discreetly grieved:

"She knew my tastes and offered me those dishes I preferred," he said. "It is an irreparable loss."

Singleness of purpose, the power of the *idée fixe*, was unquestionably one of the most important items in the success of these ladies. With all their wit, appreciation and sympathy they would never have made and held a society composed of the ablest men and brightest women of the day if they had not devoted themselves to it heart and soul. To draw such a society to their roofs and to so entertain it while there that it would come, and come again, and continue coming till death or a rival hostess broke the spell, was the end and aim of their existences.

And that this attracting and holding of such volatile elements as the interest of a man was done with little or no infusion of sentiment, should be an added proof of the genuine queenship of the *salon* rulers. If love had once played a star part in their lives he had retired, and the scene been set for a new comedy. Though some of them had been the sport of the gusty passions of

the age, that epoch was past. The majority were inclined to be of the opinion of the immortal Ninon, who said she "returned thanks to God every evening for her *esprit* and prayed Him every morning to be preserved from follies of the heart." They were for the most part women whose emotional life was over, and the page folded down. As Voltaire said, "the decline of their beauty revealed the dawn of their intellect." To dispense an unending hospitality which was a graceful combination of sustenance for the brain and the body had become the occupation of their lives.

In the original of all the *salons* the plan of procedure was laid down for each and every one of its followers. It is said that Marguerite of Navarre, the gay and audacious "Reine Margot," was the first to introduce conversation at meals. Madame de Rambouillet was undoubtedly the first to conceive the idea of entertaining as we understand it.

She rebuilt her house with an eye toward social intercourse. Until her day, ground floors were constructed with halls on either side of a central stairway. People wandered about and ate where they chanced to be gathered. This natural born Queen of Society realized the unhospitable atmosphere of such a home. She remodeled her dilapidated old *hôtel* which stood between the Louvre and the Tuileries, and when it was arranged into smaller rooms where flowers in crystal vases scented the air, screens cut off draughts, and chairs were drawn together in inviting groups, she began the long, slow work of assembling her company.

She did this with such choice and deliberate care that the entertainments of the Hotel de Rambouillet have ever since stood as the most brilliant in surroundings, the most distinguished in company, in the history of social France. Men of promise, as yet unknown, budded into fame in that stimulating atmosphere. The walls of the *salon bleu* heard the first readings of works that posterity has proclaimed immortal.

And it was not all grave and serious. Youth and beauty added their charm. Madame de Sévigné, a widow in her twenties, came there and broke hearts which were susceptible to other things than classic tragedies and graceful verse. *La belle Paulet*, who at seventeen had caught the eye of that insatiable Squire of Dames, Henri IV., was a constant guest. The king died while he as yet only respectfully admired, and *La belle Paulet*, who was called *la lionne*, because of her mane of tawny red hair, lived to evoke other and less compromising passions. She was in contrast to the Comtesse de Seze, who was not so pretty, but was famed for her smart sayings, and who said she changed her faith and became a Catholic "in order that she might not meet her husband in this world or the next." But the flower of the assemblage was the hostess' daughter, the witty and beautiful Julie D'Angennes, who lived to ful-

fill her mother's fondest ambitions in becoming the Duchesse de Montausier, one of the fairest and most winning women of an epoch rich in feminine charm.

It took ten years to establish the power and prestige of the *salon bleu*, and then for twice ten years it flourished. For thirty years, she, who because of her good looks and gracious manners had been called the Fair Arthénice, directed, guided and upheld it. The fresh young maids became matrons and migrated into other spheres, new poets and dramatists arose to take the places of those whom death removed, and the hostess passed from the radiant bloom of her maturity to the delicate fragility of old age, but the *salon bleu* continued. At home to all the *fine fleur* of her world, its mistress looked out for three decades of unbroken hospitality on the passage of the seasons over the Tuileries gardens.



ROGERS

By John D. Barry

Author of "A Daughter of Thespis," "Mademoiselle Blanche," "The Intriguers," Etc.

FRANKLIN ROGERS climbed heavily down from the coupé and walked up the steps of the big stone house. It was half-past four in the afternoon, and Fifth Avenue was crowded with people. They seemed to be racing with one another, their faces glowing in the cold air. Rogers took no notice of his surroundings. The mahogany door opened before him and he stepped into the hall.

"Mrs. Rogers here?" he asked, huskily.

"She's lying down, sir," said the English servant, glancing sharply at the pale face.

Five minutes later, as Rogers sat in his dressing-room, his wife entered.

She stared with alarm into his listless eyes.

"Anything the matter?" she asked, her thin lips twitching.

"I've caught a little cold," he whispered.

Then she assailed him with questions. When had he first felt the cold? It was that draught, of course, from the open window, the night before. She'd warned

him at least twenty times to come away. Now he'd be down sick. And had he felt a pain in his side? No pain? Well, that was something. Why hadn't he gone out and taken a stiff glass of whiskey as soon as he felt the cold coming on? And why hadn't he come home at noon so that she might do something for him? If he had that depressed feeling in the morning, why hadn't he spoken of it before he left the house? He never *would* learn to take care of himself. Of course, it was that draught. If he had only moved when she first told him! But still, there was no use talking about it. They'd better do something!

"You must go right to bed, Frank," she said, and his impassive manner conveyed obedience. "But first, you must drink something hot."

She treated him as if he were a willful boy, and he did look many years younger than she, though they were really of about the same age. At fifty she was an anæmic, nerve-racked woman, with hair that had long been white, and with a face faded by sickness and by worries over trifles. He was large and heavy, with thick black hair, a square black beard edged with gray, and with the sallow complexion of the naturally strong man scornful of exercise.

When she had given him the whiskey, she pressed the back of her hand against his cheek.

"I thought so," she said triumphantly. "Fever! Oh, why didn't you come home before? What shall I do? What shall I do?"

She dashed toward the electric bell. He fancied that he could hear it ring in the servants' room, three floors below.

When she had come panting back to his side, he said:

"I hope you aren't going to rouse the whole house."

"You must have a bath right off and I haven't a bit of mustard. I'll get one of the——?"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, you aren't going to put me into one of those things!"

She closed her lips.

"I intend to break up that cold before it develops into pneumonia." She hovered over him. "Are you sure you haven't a pain anywhere?"

"No." He turned his head away impatiently.

She looked disappointed.

"Not in your chest?" she went on, passing her hand over her own chest.

"No," he repeated more strenuously.

She had long been used to his resentments, and she had decided that there was nothing personal in them; they were merely an expression of the strange masculine nature.

When the servant came, Mrs. Rogers held a whispered conversation in the hall. A quarter of an hour later the bath was prepared.

"They may talk as they like," said Elizabeth Rogers, "but there's nothing like good old-fashioned remedies. Hot mustard baths have saved my life many a time."

That bath occasioned a great deal of profanity; but, somewhat to his own astonishment, Franklin Rogers emerged from it with skin on his back. His sufferings gave his wife a fierce joy and new vigor. She wrapped him in blankets to throw him into a sweat and she tucked him in the big bed.

"There! Now I guess you'll be all right in the morning. I'll fix some whiskey and water, and if you keep taking that during the night the cold will be broken up. Feel better?"

"Yes," he said, to conciliate her.

"And be sure and tell me if you feel any pain. I'll have some mustard poultices all ready to put on," she foolishly added.

During the evening she kept the lights low and sat beside him. The housekeeper, a distant relative of Franklin Rogers, big-boned and cadaverous-looking, with a resentful manner, came up to make inquiries and to offer suggestions. Three or four servants stood in the hall and whispered. Though Rogers kept his eyes closed, he heard them all and he hated them all. He hated to be the cause of this excitement, and he blamed his wife; the thought of the satisfaction she got out

of it made him blame her the more. He wished that she would put the lights out and go to sleep. He wanted to be alone. The heaviness that he felt in his chest meant something serious; but he would not tell her about it and give her a chance to create more excitement. He would wait till morning, and, if he felt no better, he would send for a doctor. At last he fell asleep.

II.

The next morning Elizabeth Rogers, who had dozed on the couch, was awakened by a sound that made her turn cold. It was a deep rattling, like a snore. She leaped from the couch and ran to the bed. Her husband still slept.

She knew what had happened. The crisis gave her common sense. She ran to the housekeeper, who occupied a room on the same floor, and ordered her to send one of the servants for Dr. Phelps.

While waiting, she roused her husband and applied one of her poultices. The shock of waking into certain disease made him speechless for a moment. When he tried to speak, he could only whisper.

When the doctor came, Elizabeth Rogers received him, and during the examination she talked incessantly. She repeated several times that she had warned her husband to come away from that window. The doctor did not seem to pay attention to her, but he was really considering her as an important factor in the case, and he had no difficulty in deciding what to do. When he completed the examination, he asked if she would leave him alone with the patient for a moment. She obeyed hastily; but at the door she gave him a look of injury and reproach.

"I guess I'd better tell you the truth," the doctor said. He was a man of forty with an extremely unprofessional air. His clothes hung loosely about his thin figure.

Rogers nodded.

"If you have the very best of care you

may pull through. I shouldn't be at all afraid if you were fifteen years younger. But your age and your habits are against you. You've smoked too much all your life and you've drunk too much. You're heavy and, in spite of your constitution, I don't believe you have much resistance. But, as I say, if you get the best of care I think I may bring you out all right. I'll send two nurses here and they'll do everything. You can't have your wife here though."

"I don't want her," Rogers whispered.

The doctor's eyes smiled, not with amusement, however, but at the verification of his own insight.

"I'll telephone for Miss Hubbard," he said, "and she'll be here by eight o'clock. She gave up a case of mine the day before yesterday, and I don't think she's taken another yet. All you've got to do is to lie still and do what you're told."

Rogers nodded.

The doctor started for the door. "I'll go and speak to your wife," he said. "I guess you can be left alone for a few minutes."

He disliked interviews with sick men's wives and he braced himself for this one. It proved to be even worse than he had feared. When he told Mrs. Rogers that she was not to be permitted to enter the room till her husband was out of danger, she broke into wild protests.

"But he won't have any one else," she insisted, the tears gushing from her eyes. "He's used to me. He knows my ways. It would distress him to have strangers around when he's sick. And there's no one that understands him as I do."

The doctor remained firm. Mrs. Rogers broke out again into appeals and lamentations.

"It isn't that I object to those other women attending my husband," she said, bitterly. "I suppose they know more than I do about the latest notions. But a wife's place is by her husband's side when he's sick. Where else should she be if she has any heart, if she isn't a woman of stone? He won't be able to

get along without me. Why, we've never been separated since we married, doctor, never, not for one day. He'd be lost without me. He's one of those helpless men. He leaves everything to me. *Have* the other women, if you like," she added, with the air of making a concession, and starting to return to the sick room, "but *my* place is with my husband."

He closed the door quickly.

"Excuse me," he said, "you don't want to kill Mr. Rogers, do you? His case is one of the worst I've ever had. It's been developing for three days. He's been walking around with pneumonia without knowing it."

"But that window last night——" she weakly protested.

"That may have brought it on more quickly, but it isn't the cause. Everything is against Mr. Rogers. He has only one chance in a thousand. Now, if you go into that room you'll run the risk of spoiling that chance."

"Oh, doctor," she moaned.

From the tone he knew that she was beaten.

"I'll stay out," she sobbed. "Only I must go in once, just once. Oh, it will kill me. He's so used to me. He——"

He saw that she was going to try wheedling.

"Stay till Miss Hubbard comes," he said, turning away.

III.

At sight of Miss Hubbard, Elizabeth Rogers had another shock. The nurse was a pretty, fair-complexioned girl of twenty-two, with delicate features, a high, thin voice, and a girlish, almost infantile manner. She came wearing a gray astrakan cape, a garment that Mrs. Rogers particularly disliked. The doctor, who entered with her, observed the look of consternation in the older woman's face.

"Miss Hubbard used to be one of my best nurses at the hospital," he said. "She can be relied on. Now, if you will kindly come with me——"

Miss Hubbard, in removing her wrap and hat, seemed formally to take possession of the patient.

Elizabeth Rogers made a convulsive sound in her throat. Then she went to her husband, who was dozing. She kissed him on the forehead.

"I'll go now," she whispered.

Three ladies who had come to console her were waiting for her in one of the adjoining rooms. They could not persuade her to stay there, however. She preferred to sit at the head of the stairs near the door of the sick room; so the ladies joined her. They whispered, occasionally they cried with her. They could hear the heavy breathing of the patient.

In spite of his sickness, however, Franklin Rogers had never been more active in mind. There were all those enterprises that he had to look after! Oh, how he had worked and how he had enjoyed it! How he had enjoyed spending himself each day and returning home exhausted! As the day passed he thought less about business and more about his life at home, chiefly about his wife. He knew that she was sitting out there on the stairs, and, as he lay with closed eyes, he could see her. He knew, too, who the women were that would sit with her and what they would say. Occasionally he could hear his wife scratch on the door; then the nurse would walk across the room, swiftly and silently, and whisper with her, as she groveled on the threshold. He felt no pity for her. In this crisis he was utterly selfish. His eyes, which had grown sick and yellow, occasionally followed the little nurse about the room. She wore a blue dress with white spots and a large white apron. He liked her. He liked her brown hair that curled just above her ears. He had always liked quiet women. This child soothed him where his wife would have rasped. Once when she came to give him a drink he looked up at her with his glazed eyes.

"Thank you," he said.

Then he sank back and began to talk. The nurse looked anxious.

"Oh, Mary," he said, "I'm tired.

What do you suppose makes me so tired?"

Miss Hubbard returned to the bedside. "What did you say, Mr. Rogers?"

His eyes blinked at her. "What? I—I guess I must have been dreaming."

Miss Hubbard turned away. She hoped the doctor would come soon. She felt sure that this case wouldn't last long. She was disappointed. She had hoped her new engagement would continue for several weeks. She hated to be idle for more than two or three days at a time. Often, between engagements, she had nothing to do for more than a fortnight, and living in the Nurse's Registry was awfully dreary and the rules were so strict. But it was better to stay there than to live off by yourself where you nearly died of homesickness and where it wasn't nearly so easy to keep in communication with the doctors. At the Registry there was a chance of being called up at any minute on the telephone. Once she had missed a splendid engagement by going out to the theatre. If she had come in five minutes earlier, she might have got it.

An hour later Rogers woke. His eyes were clearer and he took the food that Miss Hubbard offered him.

"I think I'm going to pull through," he remarked, with a faint smile. "I'm too tough to kill."

"Sh!" she said, turning away. He watched her; she was a nice little thing; he had often wished that he had a girl of his own. He tried to beckon to her to ask her how old she was; but he felt too sleepy. For half an hour he dozed. Then he started up quickly; his eyes did not reflect the light.

"I've had a horrible dream," he said. "Let the children go ahead there and I'll tell about it."

Miss Hubbard hurried to the bed again.

"You must lie down, Mr. Rogers. You really must, you know. You'll catch cold."

He obeyed her and he held her hand for a moment. When she drew it away, he said:

"You're the funniest girl, Mary. There isn't any harm in taking your hand, is there?"

Miss Hubbard seated herself by the bedside. She kept wishing the doctor would come.

Rogers began to mumble about business. From her two years' experience Miss Hubbard had concluded that business was the chief cause of death among men. Presently the patient spoke more rapidly. She had noticed that symptom among fever patients, too; sometimes they'd speak just like people who were perfectly well; then in a minute they'd get excited. In the loneliness of her work Miss Hubbard used to amuse herself by weaving romances about the people she nursed; but she could not think of any romance that would fit this plain-looking, hardened business man. He must be awfully rich, though, to live in such a beautiful house. Miss Hubbard enjoyed nursing rich patients; she loved luxury. She wondered if Mr. Rogers had always been rich. The "Mary" that he spoke of must be that dreadfully fidgety wife of his; for the wife of a millionaire, she seemed real countrified. But Miss Hubbard had often been disappointed in the great people she met in her professional life. Many of them weren't in the least like what she had expected them to be from reading the newspapers.

"You'd think those children belonged to you," Rogers was saying. "You look as wise and motherly as if you were thirty."

He lay still for a few moments; then he went on:

"Well, I'm sorry I can't let you have any money. There's no use talking about it. Eh? It's been a long time. Sometimes I wonder if it was worth while. We had enough at the beginning to live on in the country in a quiet way. Sometimes I wish I'd never come to New York. It's all work, and competition, and knocking the other fellow down for fear he'll knock you down, and you don't have time to breathe, much less stop and take a little comfort. What does it all amount to anyway, living like this?" He rolled from one side

of the bed to the other. "I can't stand this much longer," he groaned. "They're knocking hell out of me."

"If you will lie on your back, Mr. Rogers, you'll feel easier," said the nurse.

For an hour he dozed. Then he opened his eyes and seemed wide-awake. He looked at Miss Hubbard, who was sitting near the bed. "Come over here," he whispered. "I must tell you about that girl, the girl that was staying at the Bowkers' the summer I came up for my vacation. You never liked her, did you? I never thought you could be jealous, and I guess it kind of pleased me."

Miss Hubbard sat beside the bed.

"Don't, Mr. Rogers," she whispered. "The doctor said it was bad for you to talk." He subsided again and he lay silent for a long time.

"We're great fools about some things, all of us. We can spoil the happiness of a whole lifetime just for the sake of the vanity of a minute."

"What?" he cried suddenly. "I can't keep still. Just listen a minute. The first night, when I went to the Bowkers', I saw what kind of a girl she was, and it flattered me that any city girl should think I was—"

His speech faded into incoherent mumblings from which Miss Hubbard could glean nothing. The little nurse had begun to be interested. She wished vaguely that some other woman were with her. Her only objection to nursing was the loneliness. Even if you could hear the carriages passing in Fifth Avenue, it was lonely.

IV.

As the afternoon wore on, Miss Hubbard began to worry because the doctor did not come back; then, too, the persistent inquiries of Mrs. Rogers made her nervous. At four o'clock she heard the scratching on the door for the fifth time in two hours.

"How is he?" said Mrs. Rogers.

"He's asleep, now."

"But why doesn't the doctor come?"

"He's probably very busy. He has a great many pneumonia cases at this time of the year."

"But he has no right to neglect such a case as this. If he doesn't come in half an hour I'll call in another doctor. We ought to have another doctor anyway. If my husband isn't better tomorrow, I shall insist on having a consultation. I've a good mind to send for Dr. Saunderson," Mrs. Rogers added, turning for sympathy to her companions.

"I wouldn't change the treatment," the nurse replied. "Mr. Rogers is doing very well. When Dr. Phelps comes he'll probably not disturb him. He needs rest more than anything else."

"Well, I'm going to look at him for a minute," said Elizabeth Rogers, rising.

"But the doctor—"

"I don't care what the doctor says."

The nurse sent an appealing glance toward the other women.

"Perhaps you'd better not," said one of them, and another laid a hand on Mrs. Rogers' arm.

They heard a step on the stairs. Mrs. Rogers sank back, frightened, and had another paroxysm of weeping. They waited, thinking that the doctor was coming; but it proved to be one of the servants. By this time the nurse had entered the room, and Mrs. Rogers' courage had spent itself.

Rogers had wakened again and was sitting up, talking wildly.

"I want to tell you something," he said. "I dreamed that I was walking with Elizabeth Jennings through that big field behind the Bowkers' barn, and we were fooling and throwing stones into the pond—the pond where we used to go as youngsters and fish with pins. Well, something happened that made me threaten to kiss her if she didn't stop. I can't remember what it was. Anyway, she wouldn't stop and I jumped up—and I ran for her—and just then I saw you coming out of the woods and heading for us. When you saw us together you turned and ran. And then Elizabeth Jennings sat down and laughed. She told me to run after you."

He sank back again and closed his eyes. Perspiration was dripping from his forehead. Miss Hubbard covered his shoulders with the bedclothes, and wiped his face with a towel. He took her hand and held it firmly.

"I'm glad you've come," he said, "so that I can tell you about it."

She let him hold her hand for a few moments, feeling like a prisoner. Then it slipped from his grasp. She walked to the table where the medicines stood. When she looked around Rogers was sitting up again. She went back and tried to soothe him.

"Please lie down, Mr. Rogers," she said, gently.

He stretched out his arm toward her.

"I want to tell you the rest," he said.

"I wouldn't talk any more now," said Miss Hubbard. "You're wasting your strength. Don't you remember the doctor said you ought to lie still?"

For a moment his eyes looked intelligent.

"What doctor?" he asked, and then he said: "Oh, yes, of course. He wired down from Montreal about those stocks. But it was too late. What? The mistake was made by one of our clerks? Oh, this awful pain in my chest. I've had it for three days. I suppose I ought to have spoken about it before; but I thought it would wear off itself. That's the way I've always done when I've been out of sorts. I can't breathe. I feel as if some one was sitting on me."

"When the doctor comes he'll give you something to relieve you," Miss Hubbard said.

"Oh, he'll never come. I've settled that. I'm going into this deal alone."

He turned restlessly in the bed and continued to breathe heavily. Half an hour later the doctor came and took his temperature.

"If he goes, he'll go soon," he said to the nurse. "Awful fools these men, not to know when they're sick. If Mr. Rogers hadn't been afraid of telling his wife, he'd have stayed at home a day or two and then been all right."

Miss Hubbard explained that he had been delirious.

"We'll have to keep him quiet," said the doctor.

During the rest of the afternoon Rogers slept. The nurse had nothing to do except to listen to his breathing and to report every half hour to the broken figure at the door. At six o'clock, Miss Lawton, the night-nurse, appeared. When Elizabeth Rogers looked at the slim middle-aged woman, with a calm, resolute face, framed in red hair, her heart sank. Given a chance, she knew that she could put "that little thing" in her place; but in "that other one," as she at once began to call Miss Lawton, she recognized her superior. For Miss Hubbard she felt a pitying contempt; the sight of Miss Lawton made her vindictive.

Elizabeth Rogers had been persuaded to leave her post only to take nourishment in the housekeeper's room. During the evening she sat at the head of the stairs, wrapped in a shawl. Two of her companions, when the novelty of the interest had waned, yielded to exhaustion; the one who remained faithful, had been a widow for many years, and had lived on Elizabeth Rogers' bounty; she liked the feeling of importance that her present ministrations gave her. It was she who supported Mrs. Rogers in the belief that she was an abused woman.

"The idea of any one in your position being treated like that," she remarked several times.

"If I could only talk with him for a minute, I know he'd make them let me stay," Mrs. Rogers kept moaning. Every few moments she would listen at the door. At ten o'clock she heard his voice.

"He's speaking quite distinctly," she said. "He must be better."

The doctor had not told her that her husband was delirious; he had hoped that on waking Rogers might be coherent again. When the effect of the sleeping drug had passed, however, the patient did not know that there had been a change in the nurses. For a long time he talked volubly about his business; then he went back to his boyhood in the country, repeating again and again bits

of his talk of the day. He seemed bent on explaining something.

"Just let me explain how it happened, can't you? I know that would make it all right. When I went down to New York, I hated her. I never liked her, Mary, never. I disliked everything about her—her loud ways, and her voice. Yet when she asked me to come to see her, I couldn't help going. I don't know why I went, but I kept going. I suppose I was lonely. At last I got engaged to her. I knew I was doing wrong; but I'd never been able to get away from her."

In the late afternoon he was still delirious, and, as the doctor did not dare to give him another injection, he talked all night. The next day he had moments of consciousness.

"If we can only keep him just where he is for a few days," the doctor explained, "I shall have some hope of him. But these things that I give him don't seem to put any strength into him. I wonder who this Mary is that he raves about all the time. His wife?"

Miss Hubbard looked up at him; her eyelids trembled.

"I don't know," she replied, flushing.

The doctor walked over to the gas stove and tasted the gruel Miss Hubbard had prepared.

"H'm!" he said.

That night Rogers was plainly worse. Through his delirium he seemed to realize his condition. His talk became curiously mixed with fancy and reality.

"Think of all I've accumulated," he whispered. "And what comfort has it given to me? I can't even help her. It will all go to *her*." He laughed harshly. "What will she do with it all? Mary, if you'd only let me give some of it to you. That would be some kind of comfort."

The nurse sent for Dr. Phelps, though he had told her he would probably look in before he went to bed. As soon as he stepped into the room, he shook his head.

"We'll make one last fight," he said,

looking at the yellow face on the pillow. "Give me that champagne. Then we'll try and force some oxygen into his lungs."

For an hour the doctor remained at the bedside. Rogers seemed to be growing rapidly older; he looked sixty. The wrinkles in his face deepened; his cheek bones stood out. The rattling subsided, and he began to breathe more easily.

The doctor turned to the nurse.

"Tell Mrs. Rogers to come in," he said. "No, wait a minute. I'll tell her."

He walked to the door and left it partly open. Elizabeth Rogers and the widow were sitting alert on the stairs.

"He's going," the doctor whispered.

Elizabeth Rogers rose with dignity. Her red eyes were dry. When she entered the room, however, and saw the emaciated face, she lost self-control.

"Oh, Frank," she moaned. "What have they done to you?"

She threw herself on the bed. The wrinkled yellow face made no response; the half-open eyes saw nothing.

"He's going fast," the doctor said.

"Frank," she cried, "Frank, can't you hear me? Speak to me before you leave me. I can't bear it. If they hadn't taken me away from you, I could have saved you. My poor Frank, you've been so good to me, and so faithful. There's nothing in our life together that I regret, Frank, nothing."

She kept repeating that he had been "faithful" and that she had nothing to regret, though it was plain he did not understand. A few moments later the breathing grew so faint that the doctor leaned forward and listened for the heart-beat. Suddenly the face seemed to collapse; the bedclothes sank.

"It's over," said the doctor.

They left her with him for a few minutes. When the doctor returned to the room they found her kneeling beside the bed, her arms extended over the body. He helped her to rise and he led her to the door where the widow received her.

JUNE

By T. B. Dowd

FORTUITOUS month for the pot-boiling poet's pains,
O hail!

Fattest art thou in rhymes of all thy sisters—

Eligible, fit, concordant, sonorous rhymes

That drip

From the pen of the sudorific, doggerel, topical bard

As honey.

For, June,

Partly thou rhymest with the luminary of night,

The day's meridian, music's arranged expression.

And—softly—

The interchange of amenities between lovers twain

(In appellation identical with the domestic utensil employed by fair hands—and others—in the process of stirring tea)

Also (whilst culinarily engaged let us add)

The sweet

But insipid staple of the thrice-cursed boarding house,

The globe that, gaseous, biddeth gravity avaunt,

The colored brother, a mother's wordless lullaby;

And eke

The buckled foot covering of Maude Ethyl (though termed

In somewhat obsolete nomenclature, I admit).

The implement with which the tarry, sordid mariner

Pluggeth the cetacean in his Arctic home;

And then,

Belike (though scarce admitted to the muse's ear),

The haunt—the rosewood bulwark, crystal-flanked,

With white-ducked servitors full of fluid-juggling wiles—

All these (and more)

Are rhymes, fair June, to thee.

Are nuts, oil from the can, money from home

When the dithyrambic coiner gets busy on thy case.

Then—say!—

Suppose now, a treatment of the subject rather new,

Omitting the customary rhymes—

Wouldn't it—

Don't you think—

Ah!—thanks:—a tenner!

Thanks!—thanks!

AN ANGEL UNAWARES

By Harvey J. O'Higgins

I.

PARKER crumpled up the telegram of regrets which he had received and threw it on the floor. Depend on a woman! A woman and a married man! This was a bachelor's fate—to have all his old friends tied to weaker creatures who would fall ill at any moment and upset his plans for entertainment.

Here was his little "Bachelor Hall" supper—an ambitious effort in cold cooked meats and side dishes from a neighboring restaurant—a supper that would stand the test of comparison with anything which matrimony had spread for his former roommate since that young benedict had left him for his honeymoon in a Harlem flat—here it was, laid out on his only tablecloth "in all the profusion of a delicatessen counter" (as he had intended to remark impromptu to his guests), and now he would have to eat it himself. He looked at the table in a cold disgust.

It was a Saturday evening, and he had had his afternoon away from *The Dry Goods Retailer*, the trade journal to which he had descended from a high ambition to be famous in literature. He had spent the greater part of his half holiday in his rooms, smoking over old memories; and, besides bringing himself to a fresh sense of the failure of his life, he had gotten, out of his pipe, a sick headache and a sour distaste for food.

The thought of making a lonely meal on this "picnic provender" before him, was nauseating. He kicked back the three chairs standing in mute expectation around the table, and scowled

about him at the room. It wore an irritating air of disappointed emptiness. He could not sit down to face the faded prospect of an evening there without the company and the conversation which he had looked forward to; and he cast about in his thought for some amusement. The sight of his hat and his overcoat, on the lounge in the corner, suggested that a walk might find him something. At the least, the exercise would do him good.

Unfortunately, he took his bad mood out with him, and infected the night with it; so that the streets, instead of being filled for him with their usual entertainment of life and incident, were commonplace and quiet; and the mysterious darkness itself, always a veil to excite his fancy with its glimpses of things half seen, shut down—like the drawn blinds of the windows—against the eye of imagination. He was stale and uninspired, and walking was a treadmill labor. He stopped before a delicatessen shop, with a sudden craving for strong salt food, and went in to buy a tin of "kippered herring." Then he returned toward Washington Square, dejectedly trailing his walking stick.

And here Chance took his unpromising evening in hand, and began to mold it for him.

At the foot of the front steps of the old, red-brick house in which he had lived since the bohemianism of the quarter had first attracted him, he was accosted by a stranger in a raglan overcoat—and he awoke to that fact with a sudden "Eh?"

"Beg your pardon, sir," the man said, hurriedly. "I'm a stranger in town—from Chicago. I've been looking for a

remittance—for the last week—and it hasn't come. I spent my whole day, today, watching for it in the post office. I've not had a bite to eat, and I haven't got a friend here to borrow from. Could you oblige me with a loan of fifty cents or a dollar?"

It was a story which Parker had often heard before from "fine-clothes beggars," and he was about to go on up the steps with his customary curt refusal, when the thought of the loneliness of his rooms made him linger. "Well," he said, half sarcastically, "what has happened to you?"

He noticed that a woman who was passing swerved away as the man answered: "I—I can't tell you that. I don't want to talk about myself. I'd rather not."

Parker smiled cynically. Here was another failure in life. And *his* must have been a strange life. . . . It would be amusing to hear his story—if he could be brought to tell it. . . . It would be diverting, at least, to try.

"Where are you from?" he asked.

The man hesitated. "From Chicago," he replied.

Parker knew nothing of Chicago. "Look here," he said, suddenly, "I've left all my money upstairs. If you'll come up with me to my rooms, perhaps I can fix you." (He forgave himself the small untruth; it was necessary to catch this "confidence man" of the gutter in his own nets.)

The man looked up at him under his hat, and Parker was emboldened by a glimpse, in the half light, of a clean-shaven and young face. "I can give you your dinner, anyway," he went on. "I was just sitting down alone when I had to come out. Will you join me?"

The man drew back. "I couldn't do that," he said.

"Why not?" Parker asked, with a show of cheerful gullibility. "I'm alone, you know. And if any one drops in on us, I can introduce you as a friend of mine." He got no answer. "I've been on the rocks in New York myself. Perhaps I can put you wise, if you're a stranger here."

The man hung back, silent. Parker

saw the possibility of an amusing situation. The beggar was smaller than he, and of a narrowness of shoulder that did not argue any great strength.

"Come on," he said, playing his part, "come upstairs, and we'll talk it over." And taking the reluctant man by the arm, he began to drag him up the steps. "An old roommate of mine was coming to supper with me—with his wife—a little supper for three in my rooms. They disappointed me." He unlocked the door and pushed his uneager guest into the vestibule.

A woman in black was following them up the steps in the faint light from the open door. He supposed that she was some other occupant of the house, and he left the door ajar for her.

"I'd have had the worst sort of dismal meal alone," he said. "I'm glad I met you."

The man mumbled some unintelligible reply.

"Right upstairs," Parker directed him. "Top floor rear."

They mounted silently from floor to floor. The flickering gas jets at the landings showed the stranger to be neatly dressed, but shabby. Parker speculated on the back of that raglan overcoat, two years out of style.

He ushered him into the dining-room and turned up the light, but refrained from embarrassing him with any scrutiny. "Take off your coat," he said, without turning around. "Everything's ready but the coffee. I'll just light the gas under the soup."

He took the can of herrings from his pocket, and threw it on the loaded table. It occurred to him then that his purchase of it would seem strange. He looked up to find, to his surprise, that the stranger was a good-looking youth, dark-complexioned, whose only fault of feature was a nervous eye. He was smiling doubtfully, with a slant mouth.

"I don't know why I bought it," Parker said, and laughed. And Parker's laugh was always a pleasant surprise. He had the lean face of an athlete, lined and Ciceronian, that reposed in a muscular severity. His smile showed a younger man under the mask.

His guest took off his hat, uncovering a boyish forehead.

"Say, this is kind of you," he said, shooting shifty glances around the room. "Blamed kind. But I *wish* you'd oblige me with the loan instead."

Parker tossed aside his overcoat.

"Perhaps I can," he replied. "We can talk that over after supper," and went into the kitchen to light a burner of his gas stove and put a saucepan full of soup to warm. He whistled an air there, in a pretense that the whole affair was quite natural and commonplace. He was enjoying the situation.

When he returned to the dining-room he found his guest still standing irresolutely beside the table.

"I'm afraid," he said, "I'm afraid I can't stay to-night."

"Why not?" Parker asked.

"Well, the fact is," he answered, with a forced laugh, "I was giving you a jolly downstairs."

"Oh?" Parker said.

He nodded. "Yes. . . . It's rather a joke on me. You see, I live in Harlem, and I came down here to take a girl to dinner—at the Café Poulisson—and when I went to buy a paper at the corner I hadn't a cent. I must have left all my coin in my other clothes. . . . It was too late for me to go back. And I had to keep that appointment. . . . So I thought I'd just borrow from somebody and send it back in the morning."

It was manifestly a lie. Parker, disgusted, replied in a tone of irony that could not be misunderstood:

"Perhaps you'd like her to dine here with you. There's a place laid for her."

The young fellow colored to the eyes.

"Yes, thanks," he said, moving uneasily on his feet. "Thanks. . . . I'll just step over and ask her." He turned toward the door.

Parker put a hand on the knob. "Before you go," he said, "I think I ought to tell you that your post office remittance story is old—very old. Every 'grafter' I meet has that 'spiel.' A man of your invention ought to be able to get out a new lie—don't you think?" He leaned insolently against the door

and watched the young man studying the lining of his hat in an evident uncertainty of how to take the advice. "You see," he went on, "I don't like to let you go. You say you're from Chicago, and I don't care to have such a disgrace to the city sent broadcast—"

A knock on the door panel, loud under his ear, stopped him on the word. The young man did not look up.

The knock was repeated. Parker turned, with a lingering contempt, and opened the door.

II.

Some one in the darkness of the hall—a woman by her voice—asked faintly: "Is Mr. Boyd here?" And Parker, out of the corner of his eye, saw the startled flight of his guest's shadow across the wall.

He peered out at her: and, as his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, he recognized her. It was the woman in black, who had followed them up the steps! He connected her, in a flash of suspicion, with the woman who had started at the sound of the beggar's voice on the street.

"I beg your pardon," he said.

"Is Mr. Boyd here?" She repeated her question more loudly.

He hesitated a moment, took the chance, and answered "Yes."

"Will you tell him"—he heard her catch her breath—"that Mrs. Boyd wishes to speak to him?"

The man had a wife, then! This was promising.

"Won't you come in?" Parker replied, and threw open the door in a wide invitation to her.

She entered slowly—hatted and veiled—a slight and girlish figure, holding herself stiffly erect, with an air almost of tragedy. He saw only her large eyes in a delicate oval of pale face.

He waited with his back to them. He heard the man cry "Alice?" hoarsely. He did not hear her answer. He closed the door of his trap.

When he turned, Boyd—for it was plainly he—was standing rigid beside

the lounge in the corner, white with fear. She had gone over to him and put her two hands up to his breast, fumbling blindly at the lapels of his coat.

"Where have you been all day, dear?" she whispered.

He dropped his hat on the lounge and caught her by the elbows. He made as if to speak. His lips trembled, but the words did not come.

"Why didn't you let me know . . . you had left Slocum's?" she asked him, in a voice of the tenderest reproof.

He flushed, looking over his shoulder at Parker with a dumb appeal. But Parker, in a theatre gape, was staring at their tragedy as if it had been staged for his entertainment. Was it possible that she did not know him for what he was?

"Look at me," she pleaded; and Boyd dropped his eyes. "I went down to the office this morning to see you. They told me you hadn't been working there—since a month ago. What have you been doing?"

"S-sh!" Boyd said. "I'll tell you outside. Brown," he called, in a high, shaking voice to Parker, "let me—my wife. This is—a friend of mine. Mr. Brown."

Parker struggled with an impulse to repudiate the friendship and disown the name—to resist this attempt to make him a party to the fraud upon her. But her face showed her so piteously overburdened with worries that he kept silence and bowed.

She looked at him dully. She said: "Mr. Brown?" as if trying to make a meaning of the words. She dropped her hands, exhausted, to her sides.

Boyd took up his hat.

"I'll take you back to the boarding house."

She did not move. She shook her head.

"We can't," she said, trembling. "I don't know what—what has happened. . . . They told me—" She put her hand to her eyes, and then, with a shudder—a shudder that shook Parker with a quiver of sympathy—she began to weep.

Boyd slipped an arm about her.

"What is it?" he asked. "What's wrong?"

"We can't," she sobbed on his shoulder. "They told me—to go away. . . . They said one of the men had seen you—"

"Well?" he asked. "Seen me? . . . Where?"

"In Brooklyn."

"In Brooklyn? . . . Well," he said, with hesitation. "If I was?"

"Begging," she whispered.

He dropped his arm from her as if she had struck him.

"I tried to find you," she wept. "You weren't at the office. . . . I—I've been walking all day."

He sat her down on the lounge. "It's a lie," he said, huskily. "It's a lie. I left Slocum's a month ago. I didn't like to tell you then. I didn't want to frighten you. But I've been working all right. I got work after a little while—all right."

She fumbled with her veil, trying to push it up from her face. It clung to her cheeks, wet with her tears.

"I'm ill," she gasped. "Give me—something—"

Parker hastily decanted a glass of wine and brought it over to them. Boyd looked up at him with his same pitiful expression of entreaty; and Parker, translating it as a petition for secrecy concerning what had passed between them, nodded a grim reassurance.

"She'd better lie down," he said.

Her teeth chattered on the edge of the glass as she drank. Parker noticed how very full and red her upper lip was—how infantile.

"I got so faint," she whispered. "I had no luncheon." She looked up gratefully at Parker, through the blur of her veil, as she gave him back the glass. "Thank you," she said. "I feel . . . much better." And her voice—low and sweet—stirred a glow of pity in him that made him her protector against her husband.

Boyd drew the pins clumsily from her hat, freed it from her hair, and helped her to lie back on the lounge. She was almost beautiful—dark and large-eyed and delicate-featured; but it

was not her beauty that most touched Parker. It was the sense of her helplessness—the soft frailty of her body, the frank girlishness of her dependence and affection—and the thought of the degradation to the verge of which Boyd had evidently brought her.

She reached up from the cushions, put an arm about her husband's neck, drew him down to her, and kissed him.

"Thanks, dear," she said.

Parker turned away with a lump in his throat for her, and a compression of anger in his lips for Boyd. What had the fool been doing?

He busied himself about the table. He heard her sigh. He took his resolution—he would keep them there until he found out the truth of the affair.

He said, with hospitable cheerfulness:

"I'll have supper ready in ten minutes—oysters, soup, potato-salad, jellied turkey, and a lot of other stuff." He nodded to Boyd, who was standing limply at the foot of the lounge, gazing at his wife. "You'll have to come out to the kitchen and help me," he said. "You'll excuse him a moment?" he asked her.

She smiled—an invalid smile—across the room at him.

"Is this your regular bill-of-fare?"

"Oh, no, no," he laughed. "I was to have guests. Another friend of mine—and his wife. I never dine here myself—alone. I was trying to get your husband to accept an invitation for you when you knocked." He blushed at his imposture on the kindness of her look.

"How did you know I was here?" Boyd blurted out suddenly to her.

She frowned, and put her hand to her forehead.

"Oh, yes," she recollected. "I recognized your voice at the foot of the steps. I followed you in."

Parker took him by the arm and drew him away.

"Take off your overcoat and help me," he said; and Boyd, obeying him without question, went out of the room.

"Get a little doze, if you can," Parker said to her, lingering in the kitchen doorway. "We'll be very quiet."

She thanked him with a look that haunted his memory like music, through the scene that followed.

The kitchen was only large enough to hold a gas stove and a sink—one on each side of the uncurtained window before which Boyd stood, his back turned, looking out into the night.

Parker took down the cooking spoon from its nail over the stove, and began to stir the soup in the steaming saucepan. "Now," he said, in a low voice, "what in hell have you been doing?"

Boyd did not look around. He drew a handkerchief from his hip pocket and blew a stifled snuffle.

"What else could I do?" he said, thickly. "I got fired from Slocum's. I couldn't get work. I walked all over town looking for it. We couldn't starve."

He couldn't get work!

"Why didn't you go back to Chicago?"

He did not answer.

"Eh?" Parker said. "Why didn't you go home?"

"I couldn't get anything there," Boyd answered, reluctantly.

"Where are your parents?"

"They're dead."

"Well, you have *some* relatives, haven't you—some friends?"

He shook his head. "I'd written to them for money. They didn't send it. . . . I couldn't walk to Chicago."

"Did you apply to your wife's people?"

"I was ashamed to," he confessed, after a long silence.

The slowness of his replies exasperated Parker.

"You were ashamed to!" he sneered. "You got down in the gutter to beg on the streets—the last thing——"

He checked himself. After all, the man must have suffered everything before he brought himself to that. He considered silently.

"Is that R. J. Slocum's, the wholesale dry goods house?"

Boyd nodded.

"Have you got work yet?"

"No-o." He choked.

Parker frowned into the soup.

"For Heaven's sake, stop that sniffing," he said.

He could not understand the man. In a moment he asked:

"Do you mean to say you had to beg?"

Boyd nodded.

"Well," he said, angrily, "how did you suppose it was going to end?"

"I don't know," Boyd answered, in desperation. "How's it going to end now? . . . I pawned everything—that she wouldn't notice. . . . I told her lies about my wages. Our board bill was due. I had to get money some way."

She was destitute, then. Parker's thought turned to her for a moment of pity. He was recalled to Boyd by another application of the handkerchief.

"How long have you been out of work?"

"A month."

"How much money have you got?"

"Three seventeen."

"Did you beg that?"

"Most of it."

"Good Lord!" Parker groaned. "How did you happen to come to New York, anyway?"

"I came alone, a year ago, to get work," Boyd answered, jerkily. "We'd lost all our money—when the old man died."

"Yes; but your wife?"

"She came on to me, here. She thought she could get something to do. . . . We never had more than enough to pay our board."

"Well, but her family?"

"She'd quarreled with them. They wouldn't do anything for us."

Parker stirred the soup. He could see no way out of the situation, and that irritated him.

"Well, what do you intend to do?" he demanded.

Boyd did not answer at once.

"I wouldn't care about myself," he said. "But she'll be on the street now." He gulped a sob.

His reference to her condition touched Parker's irritation to an explosion of disgust and ill temper.

"Oh, quit your blubbing," he snarled. "What good will that do?"

And Boyd choked himself with the handkerchief.

Parker stood, with the spoon in his hand, until the soup boiled over beside him; then he snatched it from the stove, and splashed it into his new soup tureen. The girl was destitute; that was plain. She had not even a roof to shelter her for the night. Her husband was as helpless as a child. Heavens! why did such people tear themselves away from the support of their friends to face a city like New York.

"Look here," he said, at last, "if she asks you where you're working, say you're with me—on *The Dry Goods Retailer*, do you understand?—soliciting ads for the notion department."

Boyd turned to him, his face wet.

"For Heaven's sake!" Parker cried, under his breath. "Wash your face at the sink. You blamed ass, she'll—oh, get out."

He turned his back on him, and busied himself arranging the oysters on the plates. He heard Boyd at the faucet.

"Pull yourself together now," he said, in a more kindly voice. "We'll fix you up all right." He took up two plates of oysters.

"You'll have to lie like fury. . . . And don't get too ornate," he finished, over his shoulder, as he went out. "Let me set the pace."

He entered the dining-room to find her apparently asleep, her face white and placid on the cushions of the lounge, and turned so that he could see only her profile. He went on tiptoe arranging the table; and in a little while his thoughts began to move about her with a similar care, as if on tiptoe, and reverently; so that the irritation which he had felt in the kitchen passed off from him in a deep breath, and he was glad that he was able to provide her with food and rest.

When he returned to the kitchen for the third plate of oysters, he hushed her husband. Boyd looked up at him

with surprise at the change in his manner.

"She's asleep," Parker said.

He went back to the table, and, having made all ready, stood gazing at her across the quiet of the room, with a tenderness in his face that was as much for her situation as for her sex. He went over Boyd's answers in his memory to see what he had said of her, and he found them vague. They were even contradictory in that one detail concerning her relatives. He was conscious of a new suspicion of Boyd—that the whole truth had not come out of him, even with his tears. He wondered why she had married this shifty-eyed weakling.

She opened her eyes, and blinked at the ceiling. She sighed—a long, tired sigh—and he understood that it marked the return of her thought to the anxieties that had oppressed her.

"We're ready for you," he said, gently.

III.

The first part of the dinner passed off smoothly. Boyd was silent and depressed, but Parker shielded him from the notice of his wife with a volubility which divided her whole attention between her food and her host. He was trying to bring the conversation around to the point of telling her that her husband was working on the *Retailer*, but he had begun with a natural explanation of his own manner of life in a flat where he had been left, by the marriages of his two roommates, "like a grandfather in a homestead three times too large for him," and she, by the contrast with his loneliness, was reminded of the squabbles among the boarders at the house in which they lived, a block away. She chattered of these through the oysters and the soup.

Parker supposed that he would have to return to boarding again himself.

"I've been trying to find a roommate," he said, "but it's as difficult as finding a wife in New York."

Boyd had been hungrily interested in his food.

"Why don't you advertise?" he asked, with a feeble smile.

"There, you see!" Parker turned to her. "He never gets advertising out of his thoughts since he went to work on the *Retailer*."

"The *Retailer*? What is that?" she laid down her fork.

Parker affected an air of offended amazement.

"*The Dry Goods Retailer*!" he said. "What is it? It's the trade journal with the largest circulation of its kind in America—the organ of the most prosperous businesses in New York—the paper on which I have the honor to be a solicitor of advertisements in the notion department—to say nothing of my colleague here—"

"Why!" she cried, visibly relieved. "When?—I—you didn't tell me!"

"I was only on trial," Boyd replied, his eyes on his plate. "I was afraid they wouldn't keep me."

"They'll keep you all right," Parker, in a contemptuous pity, assured him. "Your experience at Slocum's—and elsewhere—that's been good training. The head of the department is an old friend of mine. He'll keep you. I'll sound him on Monday."

Boyd's hand trembled so that he had to put down his glass. If she had seen him then, she might have guessed the conspiracy. But she had turned to Parker, with a look that was grateful, to the point of tears.

"Oh, I'm so-o glad," she murmured; and he read in her face that she knew she had found a protector for her husband, and was relieved of a responsibility, and of a fear for him. Parker wondered how much she knew of Boyd's character, and laughed.

"In the meantime," he said, "we're neglecting our supper. Are you ready for the next course?"

They sat silent while he changed the plates. Boyd was deep in thought. She contemplated nothing, with a frown.

"Well," Parker said, "what are you worrying about now?"

"Oh, I forgot," she said, starting. "I

beg your pardon. I wasn't—worrying. I was wondering what we were going to do—about a boarding house."

Boyd wriggled in his chair, but did not speak.

"Well, you're not going back *there*," Parker decided.

She shook her head.

"I wouldn't care to—after——"

"Certainly not," he insisted. "And you can't go out looking for another place to-night?" he said to Boyd.

"No-o," Boyd admitted.

"Well, then," he said, "you'll sleep here. Now wait a moment—I have plenty of room, much more than I use. We can take out one of the beds from the big front room, and set it up in what we used to call the 'studio'—with the skylight. Or, there's the 'divan' in the corner, where I used to sleep when there were three of us. You can get a satchel full of your things from the boarding house. And if you will take the front room——"

She objected stubbornly. To turn him out of his room! To come in like that, and take possession of his flat! Of course, her husband and he were old friends, but this was an imposition on any friendship.

Boyd watched Parker with silent misgivings—so it seemed to the bachelor. He, for his part, pretended to consider Boyd's acceptance a matter of course. He was determined to keep them until he knew the whole truth about them.

He argued with her that it would really be a pleasure for him to be of use to them. It was not often that he could get any one to lighten his loneliness by so much as a visit over night. Of course, the rooms were not comfortable; it was not a modern apartment, by any means—the house was old.

When she finally accepted his hospitality, he allowed himself a smile of satisfaction, and Boyd saw it with an expression of hunted apprehension, that made Parker keen with suspicion.

They had finished the supper. He asked her permission to smoke. And then, having lit a cigar—(Boyd did not use tobacco)—he settled himself deliberately in his chair, and began to draw

her out. He chatted on indifferent topics, enjoying her sidelong smiles, the flutter of eyelashes on the heightened color of her cheek, her frank show of teeth when she turned, laughing, to him. It was most evidently an uneasy situation for Boyd. He fidgeted and changed color when she spoke of her home life, but regained composure when she drifted on to girlish stories of her childhood. She had been brought up in good circumstances, it seemed.

"In Chicago?" Parker asked.

"No," she said. "In Buffalo."

Parker smiled, with a cruel wrinkle of his lips.

"You're from Buffalo, too—you told me," he said to Boyd.

"Originally," Boyd hedged, and blanched like a thief.

"Of course, originally," Parker said, returning his eyes to her. Boyd pushed back his chair.

She went on through the usual course of such conversation. When she came to speak of the theatres, Parker got another glimpse of the truth. She mentioned a new comedy which she had seen in company with her husband. Parker had seen the first night's performance. That had been given on the previous Monday. They had been to the theatre within the week, then.

"We always go to the family circle," she said. "Dick's salary won't support downstairs prices."

Parker nodded to him with a set jaw. "No," he said. "I suppose not." Street begging was apparently a fairly profitable occupation. What a liar the man was!

Boyd had plucked up an air of defiance. Parker met it with an innocent face.

She went on with theatrical gossip. Boyd looked at his watch.

"Is it getting late?" she asked. "You'd better get some of our things before they lock up for the night."

"I'll leave that till later, I think," Boyd said. "Hadn't you better go . . . to bed. You must be about done up."

"But I can't," she laughed. "I have no——"

"It won't take you a minute," Parker

added, coolly. "I can lend you a satchel—if you haven't one."

Boyd clung to her with his eyes. "You'd better lie down inside," he faltered.

"Oh, I feel much better," she said. "Your dinner was a success," to Parker.

He bowed, as he arose to put his hand on Boyd's shoulder.

"Come," he said, "I'll get you the case."

"We have one—and a satchel," she replied for him. Boyd did not move. She frowned her perplexity. "What's the matter?" she asked. "Why don't you wish to go?"

Parker watched him. He was evidently wavering between a fear of what Parker might learn in his absence, and a fear of what she might think of his reluctance to go. He looked up at Parker. The older man's face expressed nothing. He got slowly to his feet.

Parker brought him his hat from the lounge, and opened the door for him. He went out with a last glance over his shoulder at her.

Parker closed the door. He heard her push back her chair from the table. He began to walk about the room, without looking at her, turning his cigar over in his fingers.

There was a silence that must have weighed on her chest like a nightmare; she labored for breath.

"What is it?" she whispered. "Dick. What is the matter with him?"

He strode up and down. It was not a case for gentleness, he decided. The cut of the knife was needed.

"Have you any parents you can go to?" he asked.

"I beg your pardon?" she said, with a tremor in her voice.

"I think you had better go home to your parents," he replied, without lifting his eyes to her.

She tried to rise, but her knees would not sustain her. She sank back.

"Tell me," she pleaded, hoarsely. "What is it?"

"Tell me first," he said. "Has he been bringing you money regularly?"

"For the last two weeks—yes. . . . Oh, something has gone wrong. I knew it. I knew it. I saw it in his face. He didn't get his pay three weeks ago. He was worried. And ever since—" She could not get her breath.

"Yes," he said. "Three weeks ago he was discharged from Slocum's."

She waited; her hand clinched at her lips.

Parker threw his cigar in the grate. His contempt of the man was expressed in the fling of his hand.

"And ever since," he said, "he's been begging on the street."

She dropped her head on the table.

"O-oh!" she cried. "Poor Dick! . . . Poor Dick!"

He gritted his teeth.

"My name is Parker," he said. "I met him for the first time—to-night—when you passed. He was begging the price of a meal from me, and I made him come up here to eat it. He lied like a common beggar. Out in the kitchen, while you were sleeping, he lied to me again—even when I wanted to help him. He said he was on the point of starvation—that he owed a board bill—that he had no money—that you'd be turned out on the street—that he had to beg."

She quivered under the pitiless lash of his exposure. She sobbed with a horrible rending and heave of the shoulders.

"Dick!" she moaned. "Dick!"

The perspiration beaded his forehead. Every muscle of his face drew tense and aching.

"You must go home to your parents," he said, sternly. "He's in the gutter, beyond hope. He's a liar to the heart. He'd steal to-morrow. I can see it in his face. You must go home to Buffalo—to your people. I'll get you your ticket, and put you on your train. Brace up, now." He patted her gently on the shoulder. "Don't cry. He's not worth it."

She mopped her face frantically with the table napkin from her lap.

"I must—where is he? Why didn't he tell me?" She burst into sobs again. "Oh, why didn't he tell me?"

"He was probably—slightly ashamed of it," Parker said, bitterly.

"He did it for me," she panted. "Oh, the poor boy—begging." She rocked from side to side in her chair. "They said they'd seen him in Brooklyn. . . . He's been doing it for weeks. He was driven to it—for me."

"You'd better go to your parents," he said again. "I can't get a man like him a place on the *Retailer*. You'll find he's done something wrong at Slocum's."

She arose, and staggered to the lounge for her hat.

"We can get a train, I think," he said. "We can take a cab and find out, anyway."

She shook her head, her mouth open, gasping against sobs.

"I'm going to hi-i-im."

"To *him*!" Parker shouted. "And you—why, he's lied to you as much as he has to me! He's been supporting you on money he's lied to get. It's as good as stolen—every cent of it. Stolen! Didn't you see him at the table, the sneak! He told me your parents were—I don't know—from Chicago, he said. He's—I don't know what he is—nor what he'll make of you. Do you understand? See? Look here!"

She brushed past him to the door. He put out his hand, but dared not lay it on her.

"For Heaven's sake," he begged, "don't do it. Go home. Leave him to me. I'll try to put him on his feet again. I will—I'll—"

She had clung, shaken, to the door knob, without strength to open the door.

"Dick!" she screamed, in a hysteria of violent weeping, and beat on the panels, as if she thought Parker had locked her in. "Dick!" she cried, in answer to his pleadings. "Dick!"

She swayed, white. He hoped that she would faint there.

Then the door swung back with her. She pitched forward, crazily, into the

hall. He heard her sobbing, down the stairway. . . . She was gone.

He looked about him at the empty room. The blood rushed to his head in an ungovernable passion of anger. He went over, his teeth clinched, to the chair in which Boyd had sat, and, raising it over his head, brought it down, with all his strength, on the table of dishes.

There are some experiences which remain a horror always in the memory—a wound, sore and raw, to which the mind tries to shut its eye, but which it touches inadvertently with pain and shrinkings at the unlikely moments. The recollection of this night remained such to Parker for many weeks. He tried to forget it, feeling that he had played the brute there to no purpose. He did not speak of it at all. But at last, one evening when he was talking to his former roommate, he told him of it, pouring out on Boyd, in the telling, all the accumulated bitterness of a festering silence.

"I can't understand him," he cried. "How a man—"

The benedict tapped him on the arm.

"Old man," he said, "if you were married—well, I can tell you this: there are times when I shudder to think what I would do—beg, lie, steal—if anything happened to—"

"Then," Parker said, defiantly, "I'm glad I'm not married; that's all."

The defiance was from the lips only. That evening, smoking in his room, he wondered what life would be with a friend—like her—who would not desert a man in any disgrace, through any weakness. The thought brought her back, crying, "I'm going to hi-i-im!" with a halo around her head.

He had entertained an angel unawares, and he was conscious, in the days which followed, that she had not left him without a message for his good.

CONFESSIONS OF A CHEERFUL PERSON

By Elia W. Peattie

IT is a great pain to a person who is in a state of iridescent optimism to observe the self-depreciation of the age. Orators, writers, preachers and artists unite in apologizing for the time, of which they imagine themselves to be the saving remnant. That the old should feel discouraged about the period which they will soon cease to illuminate, is not surprising. It has always been the habit of man to worry over the thought of what posterity is to do without him.

But that men and women just breathed for battle, so to speak, or with undented armor entering on the field, should feel disheartened at what they behold, argues too narrow a view, or else the spreading of a very insidious disease of egotism. For do not these peevish complaints practically declare that the discerning persons who utter them consider themselves superior to the commonalty; elevated above their time; prophets crying in the wilderness?

It might be suggested that what they actually confess to is their own inability to compare the past with the present.

They say that Romance is dead. Do they not read how a Crown Princess relinquished her hope of a throne for love? Do not the young confide their adorable secrets to their ears? Do they not behold a hundred thousand *Fernandos* laboring for a hundred thousand *Mirandas*, and rejoicing in the tasks which love imposes?

They refer to the time as an age of

iron, and call men the slaves of toil. Do they not observe that from year to year the independence of the employed increases, and that men of the humblest sort, for the first time in history, may call two-thirds of the working day their own? Do they not see that courts now try to protect men against the rapacity and injustice of the over-rich and the tyrannical? Never did so many men in proportion to the whole, eat meat, sit by fires, wear overcoats, send their children to school, as now. Not even the church can teach submission to painful estate. Arrogance can no longer overawe. And no one believes in caste.

It is said that the rich grow richer and the poor poorer. Rather, the riches of rich men pass previous dreams; and a man who would once have been called rich is now called poor. Science has been the servitor of man, and has taught him how to discover the wealth lying dormant in the earth, has taught him the application of materials which were a short time ago unutilized, and helped him to transport his products to the markets of the world.

Some persons even go so far in their besotted pessimism as to lament the widespread intelligence of the age, preferring the time when only a few might aspire to scholarship, and the democracy of letters was unknown.

Do they not perceive how much more to be desired it is that many men should be in the possession of practical knowledge than that a few scholars should quarrel over formulas or debate abstract hypotheses? As the castle of the feudal

baron towered above the huts of the serf, so the scholar—no less arrogant than the baron—towered above the fear-cursed, uninformed, superstitious men about him. Now, if there be no barons and no scholars, at least there are cities of comfortable homes and multitudes of lettered men. These men have at least the ability to exchange pleasant messages, to make record of their experiences, to fit into our complex and convenient modern world.

It is the almost universal custom to rail against the newspapers. There is nothing more civilizing. It is well that the doings of men should be known—particularly of those men who most object to being written about.

It is claimed that criticism is now of little value. It was never so formulated, so disinterested, so kind, so disengaged from personal considerations.

It is urged that art is mediocre. It is at least lucid, sane, definite and eager for excellence.

I believe that machine-made coats for many men are better than hand-made coats for a few; that a flood of books is better than few books; that commercialism is better than crusades, wars and visions; that convenience and comfort are to be preferred to squalor and art; that publicity is the safeguard of liberty and justice; that the railway is better than the caravan; the kindergarten of better employment than the

Mahatma; that banks are better than hidden treasure; that disagreeing sects are better than a dominant church; that the clamor of a free multitude is better than the silences of a sullen people; that a virile age means the utilization of intelligence in the constructive, rather than the contemplative occupations, and the establishment of People's Palaces rather than convents; and that if the poets are abashed by these conditions, it is so much the worse for the poets.

Come, let us celebrate Our Day. These acute attacks of mediævalism into which Ruskin, Tolstoi and others have plunged us have wasted our energies. We have looked over our shoulders till we are afflicted with strabismus. Let us rather read our Whitman and be heartened. It is only the coward or the prig who shrinks from democracy; only the selfish egotist who is afraid of the prosperity, the education and the vociferation of other men; only the incapable man who sees in the increase and development of his race any menace to himself.

For my part, I do not see why one should object to this time more than to any other time. No doubt there were always some drawbacks to the pursuit of happiness. My own opinion is that for the rank and file (I salute you, Rank and File!), there are fewer drawbacks than ever before. Let us advocate Our Day for loyalty's sake.



THE GUERDON

WHOSE love is but a selfish, transient guest,
To earth pays toll;
But he whose selfless love gives of its best,
Hath found his soul.

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

COUNT ANDRÉ LISTENED

By Miriam Michelson

COUNT ANDRÉ was slumbering snugly.

At least, he was conscious of having been snugly slumbering for some minutes when Phœbe Leffingwell's gay voice broke in upon his somnolence and wrecked it.

"In a way," she was saying, "I'm like Topsy."

"Which way? Both of you being blondes, you mean?" asked a lazy, masculine voice. It was Hervey's.

"Don't be silly. I'm serious. I mean I never had a mother to be conscious of her. And now—now that I'm thinking of—of marrying. . . ." she glanced quickly at Hervey and as quickly dropped her lids.

It dawned upon Count André in the summerhouse just behind them that he was sufficiently awake now to get out of the way. He started to do this with cautious slowness so as not to betray the fact that he had been an unwitting listener; what he had heard was innocent enough, but what might have gone before or what might come after no man might prophesy when Phœbe Leffingwell was *en tête-à-tête*. He had got to his feet and was stealing to the door, but before he could quite get there he heard a question and an answer.

"Marrying—whom?" From Hervey.

"The Count—Count André." From Phœbe.

Count André looked in the direction whence her voice came. He looked more than a moment, and a number of things. Then he blew a kiss in Miss Leffingwell's direction from

the tips of his fingers, expressing it on the balmy breeze that blew in from Geneva's broad breast, and lay down again—not to sleep.

But a long, disappointing silence followed her remark. Hervey broke it at length with a curt "*Ich gratulire.*"

"Thank you," said Miss Leffingwell sweetly. And after a pause, "It isn't announced yet, you know. But you and I, Pete, are almost brother and sister, or—or cousins, at least. I mean so far as the way we think of each other is concerned. Why, do you know," the pensiveness vanished and her voice came clear to Count André's listening ear with its old, mischievous cadence. "Do you know I have been tagging after you all my life? Old Martha loves to tell yet how every symptom of humanness you developed spurred me on to similar achievements, as a baby. I was a copy-cat, I admit, but the precociousness of my attempts atoned for their lack of originality. I fairly howled when they put skirts on me at last. It had never occurred to me that I was not to have trousers of the very color and pattern of yours when I got big enough. . . . You don't seem to find my reminiscences interesting."

"I was thinking of the future." Hervey's hands were thrust deep in his pockets, and he was staring down toward Chillon, though he saw no more of the gray old castle and the mighty Tooth of the South above it than did Count André in the shrubberied shelter of the summerhouse.

"The future? Mine—and . . ."

Miss Leffingwell's voice was very soft.

"The count's."

"It's so good of you. That's why I told you, though we—the count and I—don't want it known for a while; yet I knew," she added, simply, "that you'd worry about it."

"Indeed! Why should I?" His voice was hot.

"How absurd—why should you! What I mean," explained Miss Leffingwell, with conscientious precision, "of course what I mean is, I knew you'd think it over for me. What did you think I meant, Pete?"

Hervey flushed.

"I want your advice," Miss Leffingwell went on, apparently quite unconscious of his unsympathetic attitude. "Dear Pete, will you give it to me just as though I were really your little sister?"

"My little sister," Hervey's voice was hard, "wouldn't be likely to engage herself to a titled beggar first and then ask my advice about it afterward."

"No? No, I suppose not," Miss Leffingwell said, meekly. "Having you always to—advise her and take care of her she wouldn't be likely to. How nice it must be to have a big, capable man always looking after you when you're silly and not very clever about keeping out of scrapes! But—but I can't have you calling Count André names, Pete, you know, if I'm going to marry him. Besides, he's your host as well as mine."

"If you're going to marry him! Are you or are you not, Phoebe?"

She caught a wisp of fair hair that was blowing about her face and put it back in place very thoughtfully. In a moment it had blown free again, but she didn't appear to notice it.

"What would be your advice, Pete?" she demanded, at last, with the utmost candor in her voice.

Hervey drew in his breath.

"Do you mean to say," he demanded, "that you'll follow my advice in this matter?"

"No," she said, gently. "Oh, no, I don't promise. But—I might."

"If it agreed with what you wanted to do?"

"Why, Pete! One would think you

didn't like the idea of my getting married. Surely you expected that some day I'd—"

"Devote your father's millions to patching up a ruined estate? No—frankly, I didn't. I fancied you had too much spirit to buy a husband in the open market. I thought you had too much pride to join the caravan of comtesses and duchesses suffered to bear a title by the noble gentlemen who look upon their wives as a sort of inescapable chromo that goes with the sale. I thought you were far above the vulgar American desire to be 'my lady.' I believed—"

"I am, Pete. I have. I do—I mean. But it's different with Count André and me. He loves me so, you see."

In the shade of the arbor Count André had been sharing the foreordained fate of listeners. But for the explosion of temper that burst now from Peter Hervey's lips, he felt he could bear even more.

When it had subsided Miss Leffingwell's voice came singing upon the soft air again. It was light and plaintive with a note of frank sincerity in it that was simply too good to be true.

"Don't you really think he loves me?" she said.

"Why, of course! He adores you—and all that is yours. He lives on your smiles—till he can live on your dollars. He hopes—"

"But you once told me I was pretty, Peter Hervey." The tone was one of tender reproach.

Hervey looked at her exasperated. "Pretty" was a very mild descriptive term to apply to her as she sat, slight and winsome, in the deep embrasure of the balcony's arch cut in stone, with the blue waters of Lake Geneva for a background.

She waited a moment, but he did not speak.

"Oh, I see! You didn't mean it." She turned sadly to follow with her eyes a poetic little tri-cornered sail which was dancing off in the distance toward Villeneuve. "How's a girl to know when a man means what he says, I'd like to know?"

"Mean it!" Hervey's cry brought her eyes back to him. They smiled invitingly, but he refused to be cozened into compliments.

"André—now," Miss Leffingwell spoke dreamily, "I mean the count, of course," she added, with confusion, "he says that I—I've got the prettiest—" She kicked her slipper absently upon the old stone balcony whereon former Comtesses D'Aurignac were not wont to adopt so unrestrained an attitude as this American girl perched high on the sill, "the prettiest foot in all the world."

"He's spent a good part of his time watching women's feet—he ought to know."

"Ought he?" she asked, innocently. "He says my laugh is like a—a chime of bells. . . . I think that's pretty, don't you? . . . Don't you really? I do. And he told me this morning, when I was raving over the beauty of Montreux and the site of his villa here, that—let me see—how was it?—'God must have looked into the eyes of a woman like you, mademoiselle, and then tried, as you see, to create something worthy of their gaze.' . . . How's that, Peter?"

"Beastly. Silly and shockingly irreverent."

Miss Leffingwell looked hurt.

"Then you think that when a man says pretty things to me it's only because papa has 'steen millions? Am I so vain, Pete? I suppose I am. And will no man ever think of marrying me except for my money? If that's the case I might as well marry first as last, since there's no hope anyway. You wouldn't have me be an old maid! I suppose—I suppose even if you were to want to marry me, some one might say—"

He made a gesture of sarcastic deprecation.

"Oh, I'm merely supposing. All the romantic possibilities are knocked out of the man whose rattle, whose last lace long dress, whose very cradle and baby buggy one had fallen heir to and dwelt with in babyhood. But I was just supposing. I wonder if in that case, and if I had asked his advice, Count André

would have told me you were a fortune hunter, too?"

Count André in the summerhouse could not hear Hervey's exact words for the fury in his voice, but he gathered the import of the exclamation from Miss Leffingwell's tone.

"You will please remember, Peter Hervey," she said, as she slipped from her high seat and stood a moment before him erect and very dignified, "that Count André D'Aurignac is my *fiancé*."

Count André heard the click of her heels and the sweep of her gown over the stone balcony. Then came the opening and closing of the great French windows. And still Count André listened. He was rewarded. He heard Mr. Hervey relieve his mind in some American oaths quite new to him—although his command of English was unracially perfect. And he heard the American swing himself over the wall down to the terraced garden below, whose hem, embroidered in oleanders and magnolias, the great lake laps.

Then, at last, Count André issued from the summerhouse; stretched himself, yawned, bowed low and mockingly toward the arch of stone which had framed the blonde little Miss Leffingwell, and marched daintily off to the billiard room.

II.

The villa on Lake Geneva which the D'Aurignacs have owned since the *Sieur Philippe D'Aurignac* became the Regent's boon companion, is purely a pleasure place. In the ballroom, modeled on that *Salle Henri Quatre* where the grandmother of Philippe danced when Versailles was a palace and not a museum, Count André held a cotillion that night.

The gay house party was supplemented by guests from Geneva, and from the villas about the lower end of the lake. Miss Leffingwell wore every pearl she possessed that night, on a white lace gown that was fairy-like in pattern and texture. Peter Hervey wore lilies of the valley in his button-hole and a gloom that nothing could dis-

sipate. He was disgusted that he could not leave before the morning and treated his host with a glacial formality that was patent to everybody but the count himself. The little Frenchman was positively bubbling with good-nature, and when he wasn't buzzing about Miss Leffingwell, he singled Hervey out with a pertinacious, an irrepressible demonstrativeness that was maddening to the American.

"My dear Hervey, you will lead with Miss Leffingwell—just to oblige me?" he asked, linking his arm in Peter's with an affectionate familiarity to which Hervey responded with a stiffness of body and an atmosphere that would have congealed anybody but Count André. "A guest has disappointed me—though I still expect a message at least from her. It is a lady, the Duchesse De Rilly, whom I intended for your partner. I yet have hope perhaps of her arrival, but—"

He dragged Hervey up to Miss Leffingwell, who flushed uncomfortably at seeing the two together.

"My dear Miss Leffingwell," said the count, with *empressment*, "you will accept Mr. Hervey as a substitute? I yield you to him," he continued in a low voice full of significance, "because he is in a way almost an elder brother."

Miss Leffingwell laughed nervously.

"A substitute?" she said, in what seemed to Hervey a puzzled tone.

"For myself," Count André said, looking with ardor into her eyes, "I had counted selfishly upon leading with you—you know—"

"Ye—es," said Miss Leffingwell, uncertainly.

"There is no one that can dance like you. Small wonder," he added, in a whisper, "for yours is the prettiest foot in the world, mademoiselle."

Miss Leffingwell started. A wave of color crept up over her slender shoulders and suffused her delicate, spirited face. Hervey, in the party of three but not of it, saw her color come and go and cursed the count in his heart for a fellow without taste. But he walked off with Phoebe on his arm.

She was *distracted*, though, and her

eye followed the count as he hurried away. She blushed again when Hervey noticed this and affected to look away, but when Count André turned at the end of the hall, he caught her watchful, questioning glance and her lids drooped guiltily. Then she began to chatter to Hervey in an inconsequential, uncertain way that made him fairly ache with jealousy.

"A fellow like that," he groaned, inwardly, "to make mischievous Phoebe Leffingwell go from red to white and lose her pert self-confidence."

In spite of her possession of the prettiest foot in the world Miss Leffingwell did not dance the first set well. And Hervey, who had never led a cotillion and was savagely blue and out of sorts, made a dreary partner. Count André, who had been watching them delightedly, flew up and officiously conducted Miss Leffingwell to her second partner.

"He's making an ass publicly of himself and an exhibition of her," was Hervey's sneering comment. "One good thing—she doesn't seem to be enjoying it."

She wasn't. In fact she looked distinctly miserable after the count had left her with a low bow saying, "Why are you so quiet to-night, *chère mademoiselle*? I miss your laugh, so like a chime of bells."

The Greek gentleman who danced the next set with Miss Leffingwell had no English, a fact for which Phoebe was profoundly grateful. The perfunctory few French phrases they exchanged gave her time to think.

She looked about in nervous apprehension as the figure ended. But the count was at the other end of the *salle* walking off toward the smoking room, his arm reaching with awkward affection up about tall Peter's neck.

"Tell me, *mon cher*," he was saying, "in what part of America do you live? I intend to visit there before long—as perhaps you may have guessed—and I hope that the friendship which we have formed here shall certainly be continued there."

Hervey looked helplessly at him. Nothing but a blow would reach this

Frenchman evidently. And one is unfortunately barred from beating one's host merely because he sticks to one like a barnacle.

The place was empty save for Sir Harry Polton and little Fred Greenway smoking diligently on the middle divan from which they had a good view of the dancers. Though Sir Harry did not dance he never missed a cotillion because, he said, it gave one "such a blooming good opportunity to see other men make jolly idiots of themselves." And Greenway, who affected all the Englishman's fads, sat smoking his cigar in his company and listening to the older man gush the follies of fashion.

"A woman now, if she's pretty and young," Sir Harry had been saying, "can put on even a clown's rig and play the clown or the fairy or the child and still be graceful and good to look at. But a man, after he's passed the first grace of adolescence (and but one boy in ten thousand is built and conducts himself like Prince Charming) steps out of the sphere of prose at his peril. No modern man may trifle with his years, his build, the costume and the habit of thought of his day. When he does he's food for laughter, and the more seriously he takes himself, the funnier, of course, he becomes. An occasional Frenchman, like D'Aurignac now—but here he comes with that young American who so well illustrated the point I'm making; he led the cotillion like a church deacon passing the plate."

D'Aurignac led Hervey past them both to the alcove giving on the piazza, whose curtained privacy favored confidences.

"America!" he was saying with a sort of pseudo enthusiasm. "It is the El Dorado of nations—the world's mining camp—the place of possibilities and contrasts. What a pity that civilization will one day spoil it! I shall go there after my marriage just once, for the charm—"

"Marriage!" Greenway called from the divan, interrupting what he fancied the count had not meant for his ears. "You, D'Aurignac! Impossible! And the lady?"

"The lady?" The count replied airily, turning, with his hand on the tobacco-colored draperies before he pulled them close, shutting himself in with Hervey. "The lady's name is still a secret. I hoped to announce it at this very ball, but an accident has changed my plans. But she is—my lady. A lady of loveliness, of grace, of spirit. A lady, too, of wealth." Out of the corner of his eye he glanced at Hervey and saw him wince. "Oh, I am all unworthy of her, yet—such is the generosity of these amiable creatures, gentlemen, they love us." He pulled the portières close, lit his cigarette, and falling back upon the cushions looked up enjoyingly at Hervey, standing stiffly facing him.

Just as he did so, he caught a glimpse through the open glass door of a robe of lace out on the piazza and the shimmer of pearls.

"Such eyes, she has, eh, Hervey?" he demanded, raising his voice. "Such eyes as God might have looked into before He tried to create such a landscape as this worthy of their—"

A crash—the tinkling crash of a fallen wineglass came from out on the balcony.

Hervey, glad of any excuse to get away, hurried to the window. Phoebe Leffingwell stood there—her partner had left her for a moment to get her an ice—the splashed stain of wine on her lace gown and the shattered glass at her feet.

At the sight of Peter's face she stretched out her hands to him pitifully.

"Oh, Pete," she cried. "I'm in a dreadful mess. I must see you to—tell you something. I have something to confess—"

"Miss Leffingwell," Count André hurried out upon the balcony, brushing past Hervey, and putting her hand on his arm with an air of ownership that was the last straw on Peter's patience.

"I beg your pardon, D'Aurignac, Miss Leffingwell said she had something to tell me—personally."

He closed the window behind them and faced about.

Count André smiled as though Her-

vey's tone were courtesy incarnate instead of a blow in words.

"The little matter she had to confess—that matter, whose import you may surmise, *mon cher* Hervey," he began. But Phoebe interrupted.

"I must tell him myself. Oh, do let me tell him myself!" There were tears in her eyes turned appealingly to Hervey.

"We agreed, did we not, not to make it public?" the count asked, tenderly.

She pulled her arm from his impatiently.

"How can you torment me so!" she cried.

"Look here, D'Aurignac," Hervey was breathing hard. "Miss Leffingwell has——"

"A telegram for you, Monsieur le Comte," said a servant, parting the curtains behind them.

Count André turned, and in the moment it took him to tear open the envelope and read the message, Hervey saw his opportunity and seized it.

"Phoebe—for God's sake—pity me and let me help you," he whispered, hurriedly. "There is only one way. You don't care for him—you can't care for him. What is driving you on? You've been miserable every time he has spoken to you to-night. And I can't bear it for—for I—I do love you. I've loved you so long—so long, and stood aside in my poverty all for this—to let this fellow come in and . . . Phoebe, really? Really! . . . Oh, dearest!"

She had put out her two hands to him with a welcoming tenderness that was as unmistakable as the dancing glory in her eyes.

D'Aurignac turned, the open message in his hand. He held it as though it meant more to him than mere insentient matter. And he looked from Hervey to Miss Leffingwell with a composure that was marvelous in Peter's eyes.

"Oh, it seems—it seems——" he began.

"Count André!" exclaimed Miss Leffingwell, appealingly. "You will forgive me. It was inexcusable; of course, I didn't know that——"

"That the feeling you had for me was

not what you could have for—Hervey, say?" he interrupted, almost gayly. "Well, you may imagine my grief. For the rest, it is at an end—our short engagement? *Eh bien*—my congratulations, mademoiselle. There is nothing to forgive."

III.

"A queer fellow," Hervey said to his wife when, just before they sailed, they received the notice of Count André's marriage to the rich, young widowed Duchesse De Rilly. "He didn't mourn you long, Phoebe darling. I'd have blown out my brains if you'd thrown me over as you did him, you saucy jilt."

"Would you—would you really now, Pete?"

He nodded, pulling her tenderly toward him.

"Then—then," she was evading his eyes yet, watching him curiously. "That justifies me—a bit—doesn't it?"

"In what?"

"In telling you a fairy story."

"A fairy story—when? Come. Out with it!"

"Peter Hervey," she said, her trembling voice was muffled, for she had buried her face on his shoulder and only the flaming pink of her ear was visible. "You've just got to be generous because I—suffered enough—that night for such a little bit of a fib. You know when—I told you all that stuff about our engagement—mine and the count's——" Her voice trailed off into silence.

"Yes?" A premonitory suspicion lit Hervey's eyes.

"Well—he—he was listening in the summerhouse, and——"

"The scoundrel! And——"

"And—Peter—there was no engagement—none—no thought of any except in my own head to—to make you . . . You wretch, stop that laughing!"

"And the foot? And the laugh—and the eyes—oh, ho! ho! ho!"

But she put her fingers to her ears, and when that failed to shut out the sound of his mirth, she laid them appealingly on his lips. So Peter kissed them.

SIMON'S FATHER

Translated from the French of Guy de Maupassant

IT was noon. The door of the school opened wide and the boys came rushing out, jostling one another. But, instead of scattering to their homes as they did each day, they paused at a little distance from the door, gathered in groups and fell to murmuring mysteriously.

Simon, the son of the woman known as Blanchotte, had come to school for the first time that morning.

They had all heard Blanchotte talked about at home; and though their mothers acknowledged her decently in public, among themselves they considered her with a kind of contemptuous compassion. This attitude had passed to the children, without their knowing the reason for it.

Simon did not know these boys because he never went away from home, never ran with them in the streets or along the banks of the river. Nor had they much affection for him; and it was with a kind of joy, not unmingled with wonder, that they clustered now and repeated to one another the information conveyed by a fellow of fourteen or fifteen, who seemed to be very knowing, from the shrewd way he had of winking his eyes.

"Say, did you know—Simon—well, he hasn't got any father."

The son of Blanchotte appeared in due course at the door of the school. He was about seven or eight years old, rather pale, very clean, and timid almost to the point of gawkinsness.

He was going his way home, when the boys, constantly whispering and stealing crafty and cruel glances at him with the eyes of children bent on mischief, gradually came nearer, until he found himself completely surrounded.

He stood stock-still, surprised and embarrassed. He wondered what they meant to do to him.

The older lad, who had brought the news, rather proud of the importance derived from it, stepped forward and said to him:

"Say, what's your name?"

The little fellow answered: "Simon."

"Simon what?" asked the other.

The child replied, all confused: "Simon."

The other fellow cried: "That's not a name. You've got to be Simon something or other."

For the third time the little chap, now on the verge of tears, murmured: "My name is Simon."

The other gamins began to laugh. The older fellow raised his voice in triumph:

"Didn't I tell you he had no father?"

A sudden silence fell upon them. The children were amazed at this most extraordinary, impossible, monstrous fact—a boy who had no father. They looked upon him as a phenomenon outside nature; and they began to be conscious of an increase of that feeling of contempt their mothers had for Blanchotte. Until now they had not understood.

Simon, meanwhile, was leaning against a tree to keep himself from falling. All power had gone from him as a result of this irreparable disaster. He tried to find some explanation to give them. But he could conceive of no answer that would explain away the frightful fact that he had no father. Finally, livid with desperation, he cried out to them:

"I have so got a father."

"Where is he?" demanded the big boy.

Simon could not say. He did not know. The children laughed excitedly; and true sons of the fields, so near the level of brutes, they felt the cruel hunger that impels the fowls of the barnyard to devour one of their own kind as soon as it is wounded.

Just then Simon caught sight of a neighbor, the son of a widow whom he had always observed alone with his mother, as he himself was.

"Well, you haven't got any father, either," he said.

"I have so," retorted the boy.

"Where is he?" demanded Simon.

"He's dead," the boy answered, with superb pride, "he's buried in the cemetery."

A murmur of approbation swept around the circle of little wretches, as if the fact that their comrade had a father buried in the cemetery made him still greater than the boy who had no father at all. And these young rascals, whose fathers were nearly all hard-drinking, low-minded and tyrannical to their wives, began to crowd upon little Simon as if they, the lawful born, would crush the life out of him, the illegitimate.

The one nearest him stuck out his tongue at Simon and cried, tauntingly:

"Have no father! Have no father!"

In a rage Simon laid hold of this boy by the hair, kicked him in the shins and bit him in the cheek cruelly. The crowd then fell upon the two. They tore their friend free, knocked Simon down, rolled him in the dirt and beat him mercilessly, while those not thus engaged applauded loudly.

The little fellow picked himself up and began to rub the dirt off his blouse.

"Why don't you go and tell your father?" yelled one of the mob.

At this Simon seemed to feel his heart crumble. They were stronger than he, they had beaten him; and he could say nothing to them, for now he felt that it was true, he had no father. By force of pride he fought for a few seconds against the sobs that choked his throat. Then a feeling of suffocation

came over him, and in a moment, without a cry, he began to sob great sobs that shook his whole body.

At this sight a wave of ferocious joy spread over his enemies. Like savages in a carnival of cruelty, they joined hands and danced around him, yelling in chorus:

"Has no father! Has no father!"

Suddenly Simon stopped sobbing. He fell into a frenzy of rage, and grabbing up the stones at his feet, threw them with all his might at his tormentors. Two or three were hit and ran away screaming, and the boy now had so terrible a look that the others retreated in a panic of cowardice.

As soon as he was alone the poor little fellow hurried away toward the open fields. He had remembered something that had filled his soul with a great idea. He would drown himself in the river.

About a week previous a poor devil of a beggar had thrown himself into the river because he was absolutely starving. Simon had seen them drag the body out of the water. The unhappy man, who had always looked so wretched and ugly and dirty, to Simon's surprise now seemed quite at peace, with his pale cheeks, his long wet beard, his calm, staring eyes.

"He's dead," some one had said.

"And happy now," added another.

And so Simon wished to die because he had no father, just as the poor man who had no money.

When he came close to the water, he watched it flow. He could see the fishes darting here and there in the clear current and leaping upward occasionally to gulp the flies that floated on the surface. He became so interested in their maneuvers that his tears ceased. But, as it happens in the moments of calm during a great storm, a sudden gale arises that wrenches all the trees of the fields and whirls away to the horizon, so this thought returned to him with a dolorous wave: "I shall drown myself because I haven't got any father."

It was a beautiful day. The mild sun warmed the grass. The water shone like a mirror. To little Simon came a respite of blessedness, of the languor

that follows tears, when he wished to fall asleep on the warm bed of grass.

A little green frog alighted at his feet. He tried to catch it. He ran after it, snatched at it and missed it three times. Finally, he managed to grasp one of its hind legs, and he laughed at the contortions the frog made in its efforts to escape. It would lean back on its hind legs, and then, with a sudden movement, leap forward and beat the air with its forefeet as though they were hands, and all the while its golden-ringed eye stared around in question. This action reminded him of a toy he had, a tiny soldier, perched on a zigzag frame, that sprang up and down at the clasp of the hand. Then he began to think of his home, of his mother—and in a great flood of sadness his tears streamed anew. He shuddered in his grief. He knelt down and commenced the prayer he said at bedtime each evening. But he could not go on with it. His sobs came so fast and tumultuously that his whole body trembled. He could think no more; he could see nothing and he wept heartbrokenly.

Suddenly he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder, and he heard a big voice asking:

"What's making you feel so bad, little man?"

Simon looked around. A great workman, with very black, curly hair and beard, was examining him with a friendly eye.

His eyes and his voice full of tears, Simon answered:

"They—they beat me—be-because I haven't any father."

"What!" said the man, with a smile. "Why, everybody has a father."

The child repeated painfully between sobs:

"I—I—haven't got any."

At this the workman's face assumed a serious air. He had recognized the boy as the son of Blanchotte, and, though a newcomer in this part of the country, he knew her story vaguely.

"Well, well," said he, "don't cry any more, my boy. Come along with me to your mother. We'll find a father for you."

They went their way, the big workman holding the little fellow by the hand. The man was smiling again now, for he did not object to the chance to see Blanchotte, who, he had heard, was one of the best-looking girls in the neighborhood. His mind was conjuring up possibilities.

They stopped before a little white house that looked very trim and clean.

"Here it is," cried the boy, and then: "Mamma! Mamma!"

A woman appeared at the door. The smile faded from the man's face, for he understood as he caught sight of the tall, pale, severe figure standing upon the threshold, as if to defend herself against him and all men.

A sudden timidity touched the man. He pulled off his cap, and stammered: "Madame, here's your little boy. He was lost by the riverside."

But the boy leaped to her arms and, in a new fit of weeping, said:

"No, mamma, I wasn't lost. I went there to drown myself. The other boys beat me—they—they—beat me—because I haven't got any father."

A scarlet flood rushed into the mother's cheeks. She fell to kissing her child passionately and the tears ran quickly from her eyes. The man, quite moved, stood there, not knowing how he should take his leave.

The boy ran toward him in a moment and said:

"Won't you be my father?"

A burdened silence fell upon the scene. Blanchotte, mute and agonized with shame, leaned heavily against the wall, her two hands pressed against her heart.

"If you won't," the child went on, when no answer was given to his question, "I shall go back and drown myself."

The workman took the matter as a whim, and said, laughingly:

"Why, of course I will."

"What's your name, then?" asked the boy, "I want to tell them when they ask me again."

"Philip," said the man.

Simon said nothing for a moment while he sought to fix this name well in

his memory. Then, holding out his arms, he said, quite comforted:

"All right, you are my father, Philip."

The workman caught the boy up in his arms, kissed him on both cheeks, laid him down and then went off at great strides.

When Simon came into school the next morning he was welcomed by a malevolent smile from the others. When they left the school and the big boy was about to recommence his taunts, Simon flung these words at his head, as he would have flung a stone:

"My father's name is Philip—that's what it is."

"Philip who? Philip what? What does that mean, Philip? Where did you get your Philip?"

Simon vouchsafed no reply. Invincible in his faith, he cast a defiant eye upon them all, ready to let himself be tortured by them before he would flee. But the schoolmaster kept watch over him and he went home unmolested.

For three months the big workman, Philip, often passed the little white house of Blanchotte. More than once, when he saw her sewing at the window, he summoned his courage and spoke to her. She replied politely. She was always very grave, never laughed with him, and never allowed him to enter the house. For all that, with the vanity of man, he imagined that when she talked with him, her face had more color than usual.

A shattered reputation, however, is pieced together only with great difficulty and it always remains rather fragile. Despite the cautious reserve of Blanchotte, people were already whispering about her.

As for Simon, he had become very fond of his new papa, and went walking with him almost every evening after the day's work was done. He attended school regularly, and went his way among his fellows with an air of great dignity, never noticing any taunts they might fling at him.

But one day, the big boy who had first attacked him, said to him:

"Say, you lied to us. You haven't got no father named Philip."

"What do you mean?" asked Simon, weakly.

The big boy rubbed his hands together, and continued:

"Well, if you had a father he would be married to your mother."

The apparent logic of this statement disturbed Simon. He replied, nevertheless:

"He's my father just the same."

"Well, maybe he is," retorted the other with a laugh, "but he ain't your real father."

At this the little son of Blanchotte bowed his head and turned away musingly. He walked on toward old Loizon's blacksmith shop, where Philip worked.

The shop lay almost buried under trees. It was very dark within, save for the fire that at intervals threw into a glare the five bare-armed giants who beat their anvils with a terrific noise. They stood there, like flaming demons, their eyes fixed upon the heated iron that they tortured into form; and their heavy minds arose and fell with the rhythm of their sledges.

No one noticed Simon enter. He stole softly up to the side of his friend and touched his arm. The man started and turned. In a moment the work of the shop was interrupted and all the other men were studying the boy intently.

In the midst of this unusual calm came the shrill treble of Simon:

"Say, Philip, that big boy Michaud just now told me that you are not really my father."

"How's that?" asked the workman.

"Because you're not married to my mamma," the boy replied in all simplicity.

No one laughed. Philip leaned his head upon his hands, supported by the sledge upright on the anvil. He fell into a reverie. His four companions watched him in silence. A mere mite beside these giants, Simon waited in all anxiety.

Suddenly one of the men, as if speaking the thought of all, said to Philip:

"Just the same, Blanchotte is a decent girl and she's made her way bravely despite her misfortune. She'd make a good wife for any respectable man."

"That's right," said the other three.

"And, after all, was it her fault?" the man went on. "The fellow promised to marry her, and I know more than one woman who is well respected and who has done just as much as she has."

"That's quite true," said the three men, in chorus.

"How much the poor creature has suffered," the spokesman continued, "to bring up her boy all alone, and how often she has wept since the time she has never left her home except to go to church, only God knows."

"And that's so, too," said the others.

And then there was no sound save of the bellows bringing the fire back to life.

Philip leaned toward Simon, and said, brusquely:

"Go tell your mamma I am coming to talk with her this evening."

He returned to his work and the five sledges swung down in unison upon the anvils. Until evening they smote the iron, mighty and joyous like sledges that had found content. Yet, as the chimes of the cathedral resound above the bells of the other churches on high feast days, so did the sledge of Philip dominate the reports of the others, as it fell second after second with a deafening ring. He gave himself to his work passionately, his eyes aglow as he stood beside the anvil in the flying sparks.

The sky was laden with stars when he knocked at the door of Blanchotte. He wore his Sunday blouse, a new shirt, and he had had his beard trimmed.

The young woman appeared at the door, and said, regretfully:

"It is not right of you to come here at night, sir."

He tried to answer, stammered, and stood perplexed before her.

"You can understand, I hope, that I don't wish to have myself talked about any more."

Then Philip blurted out:

"How would it be if you agreed to be my wife?"

No voice answered him, but in the darkness he heard her stagger as if to fall. He rushed into the room; and Simon, who was in bed, heard the sound of a kiss and some words that his mother uttered in a low voice.

Then he felt himself caught up by his friend, and held at arm's length.

"You tell your mates, to-morrow," the man cried, "that your father is Philip Remy, the blacksmith, and that he'll pull the ears of any boy that harms you."

The next day, when all were seated in the school and the lessons were about to be begun, little Simon stood up, pale and trembling, and said in a shrill voice:

"My father is Philip Remy, the blacksmith, and he says that if any one hurts me he'll pull their ears."

This time no one laughed, for they all knew Philip Remy, the blacksmith, a father of whom everybody would have been proud.



THE HIDDEN PEARL

THE Mind like some vast sea, now gray, now blue,
Gives us word-shells of wondrous shape and hue;
Yet far below the billows and the beach
Hides some white pearl of Thought we cannot reach.

WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE.

THE MAKING OF A CHAMPION

By Roland E. Andrews

YOU'VE met a lot of these Gentlemen Jacks and such like prize fighters, haven't you, sir? Well, then, you know that most of 'em ain't Gentlemen Jacks or any other kind of gentlemen. They're tough, that's what they are, an' no man can spend his life poundin' other men's faces without gettin' that way. Here's one that admits it. I'm square an' you know it; an' I don't drink too much, nor shave my head, nor swear when there's ladies around. But I don't pretend to be no gentleman. No, sir, I'm a scrapper, that's what I am, an' I ain't proud of the business, neither.

When I get money enough—I've got quite a little wad now—I'm goin' to get out o' this ring business an' go in for somethin' decent. I'm tired o' all this talk an' bluff an' chin music, with cheap sports an' deals an' skins an' poundin' people. Yes, sir, I'm tired of it, an' just as soon as I can I'm goin' to quit. But just now, if you know any feller wants to make a match at 133, sixty and forty, or winner take all, I'm your man. I'm in this deal now, an' I've got to make my dough out of it.

I was sore on the fightin' game from the time of my first fight. I won it, an' I've won every one since. But I've always been sore on it just the same. Why? Well, 'cause winnin' that first fight showed me just what a skin the whole thing was. I went into it in a kinder funny way, you know, an' the dose I got then made me pretty sick. I tell you, the gang that backs the scrap game is a bum gang—bum right down to the ground.

Yes, I went into the poundin' business

sorter funny like, but gettin' in, I stayed there. Lord, I've been a-tryin' to get out for moons an' moons since then. It happened about five years ago. I was in dead hard lines then. I only had the grocery job bringin' me nine bones a week, an' mother was sort o' sick like, an' I was ravin', slavin' crazy over Kitty Maloney. You know what that means, sir. Nine bones a week is little enough for a young feller, anyway, an' most o' my nine bones went to mother, God bless her! That left me in bad shape with Kitty. Kitty liked me, but she liked dances an' candy an' excursions an' other women things, too; an' how in the world was I, on nine bones a week an' my mother sick, a-goin' to give 'em to her? I used to fret an' worry about things night after night, an' when I seen Kitty goin' somewhere with some other feller it seemed as if I'd just break up. Oh, it was mighty tough sleddin', sir, I can tell you, an' lots of times I used to go along the streets sayin' to myself: "How can I get dough enough to marry Kitty?" an' "I must get dough enough to marry Kitty"; an' when I couldn't stan' it no longer I'd go down to the atheletic club we had back o' Kelly's saloon an' pound the bag till I was black in the face for wind. It made me feel sort o' better. Them was queer days with me.

Well, I might ha' stood it all right, an' that means I might still be puttin' up sugar in the grocery, if Kitty hadn't all of a sudden taken up with Tom Moran, a feller that always had dough in his pockets, though he never seemed to do nothin' but tend bar once in a while on rush nights, an' box in some

of the preliminaries they always had before the big fights up the avenue. He was a husky sort of feller an' a slick dresser. He was pretty good with the gloves, too, an' we fellers in the athletic club thought he was a world beater. Kitty went to the Rose Leaf Social's dance with him, an' the next Sunday afternoon when I went 'round to see her she was out walkin' with him. I seen her the next night an' I asked her what it meant.

"Oh, Mr. Moran is handsome," says she.

"He's got the face of a sneak," says I, for I was mad.

"He's always flush," says she.

"Ask him where he gets his money," says I.

"He's so atheletic," says she.

"He'll need all his athletics when I get hold of him," says I, an' then I lost my nerve an' broke down an' told her I loved her, an' that I couldn't stand it to see her goin' 'round with another feller, an' a whole lot o' other stuff that fellers generally tell girls they're daffy over, an' Kitty, she said that she loved me, too, but that she liked pretty things an' dances an' good times, an' that I must hurry up an' make more money, an' she kissed me an' I went outside an' swore a blue streak an' felt like cryin'.

Next night at the athletic club, Kelly tells me that Moran's been around sayin' that if he wasn't in trainin' for a scrap up the avenue he'd beat the face off me. I went out an' punched the bag an' wished it was him. When I was goin' home I met Kitty.

"Tom says he'll beat the face off you," she says, sorter scared like.

"For what?" says I.

"He says you called him a sneak an' a thief, an' said you'd lick him if you caught him," says she.

"Who told him that?" says I; for I'd mentioned Moran to no soul but Kitty.

"He came into the house right after you left last night," says she, "an' he must ha' heard you swearin' around outside." Then she leans over close to me, an' says, softly: "Do be careful, Billy—but if you do get mixed up with him, remember you're fightin' for me."

"Supposin' he licks me," says I.

"Then he's the better man," says she.

I walked home in a trance. Next day I walked myself up to the manager of the scrappin' club up the avenue, told him my name, give him my weight, an' near knocked him into a cocked hat by tellin' him that I wanted to go against Moran in the show what was comin' off the next week.

"Moran's down to go against Kid Conroy," he says.

"Everybody knows that's a lobster fight," says I. "Conroy can't stand against Moran for a round. I'll give him a fight."

"Moran may not like the change," says he.

"Oh, Moran will be willin'," says I, "an' he won't have to worry about no split purse. Winner can take all. If I don't lick him I don't want a cent, an' we'll call it catch weights, too. He can weigh a ton if he feels like it."

The upshot was that the manager said he'd take me on to meet Moran in the main preliminary, ten rounds at catch weights, for \$500 on the advertising bills an' \$100 in real money. "Now," says I to myself, "I'll put Moran out of the runnin' an' make money enough for a start, or I'll go to the devil." An' I went home an' told my mother.

Mother didn't like it at all. "I don't want my boy a prize fighter," she says, an' I had a hard time of it with her. I told her we needed the money, an' that it was really only a little friendly exhibition, an' a whole lot o' other stuff, but 'twas no go with the mother. She couldn't stand for the fightin' game, an' I finally shut up tryin' to explain. At Kelly's an' the athletic club they was crazy. They patted me on the back an' told me I could knock the head off him even if he was a comer, an' the next minute they was tellin' me not to mind if he did beat me, 'cause he was bigger an' stronger, an' an out an' out professional. I picked out a couple of fellers to help me train, an' then I made a break for Kitty's.

I spent mighty little time with her. "I fight Moran in the avenue ring on

Friday night," I says, "for a wad o' dough an' you."

"Oh, Billy!" says she. "In a real ring?"

"Real ring, real money, real punches," says I, "as your friend Moran 'll find out."

"Oh, Billy!" says she; an' when I went away, she whispered: "I'll be there to see you, Billy."

That week was a lively one. I just lived over in the athletic club, an' I boxed with all sorts o' fellers, an' hauled at the chest weights, the two trainers hangin' around to rub me down an' keep me feelin' good. Moran was trainin' at a real gymnasium up the avenue, an' they said he was in great shape. He'd been mighty pleased at the change in the programme, had Moran. He sent word that he'd make a jellyfish of me, an' that I needn't hope to see straight for months after he got through, but he was always a bluffer an' he didn't scare me much. Old Pop Kelly, what run the saloon an' used to be a heavy weight himself, he kept lookin' me over an' sayin': "Keep your eye on him, boy, an' when you do hit him, hit hard." An' the boys what was helpin' me train went out an' bet every cent they could raise that I'd win. I just knew I'd win, myself. I had to win. There was no way out of it. It meant Kitty an' the money, an' I had to win.

I was kinder nervous the night o' the fight, sittin' in a little stuffy dressin'-room with Old Kelly an' the trainers. They talked a blue streak to me about nerves, an' punches an' things, but I didn't think about nothin' but Kitty. The middleweight champion, what was goin' on in the main bout, he come in an' shook hands with me, and then the manager feller sung out that it was time for the preliminary.

I can remember that ring awful plain. It was in the middle of a great big buildin' an' it seemed as if there was more than a million people there, all smokin' an' making a kinder little hummin' noise—talkin', you know. There was a couple o' chairs in the corners o' the ring, an' on the one I sat down in there was some blood. The feller

in the first preliminary had been punched pretty hard. My knees was kinder shaky when I sat down an' looked around, an' I could feel my heart pumpin' away inside, but I wasn't a bit frightened, not even when Moran with a big green bath robe around him, climbed through the ropes and commenced grinnin' at me. One of his seconds pointed through the smoke at me, an' said somethin' that made Moran laugh. I was mad clear through then, an' I almost got out o' my chair—but just then I heard one o' the trainer fellers behind me say to the other: "Fer Lord's sake, will you look up there!" an' I looked, an' way up on the roof, her head just showin' through a winder in the sort o' cupola thing was Kitty. She saw me look up, an' she smiled. Then she dodged back. An' right there I made up my mind again that I'd lick Moran if I had to kill him.

Me an' Moran shook hands finally an' listened to a lot o' talk from the referee, an' then came the bell, an' we jumped at each other. "Cool, Billy, cool," says Old Kelly when I started, an' I heard one o' Moran's men tell him to tire me out. We fiddled a minute, an' then he swung his left. I ducked an' clinched. My chest was right against his, an' he just hissed the words into my ear, "I'll murder you, Billy Foley," he says. We broke clean, an' the next minute he hooked me sort o' stiff under the chin an' laughed. I put out my right straight for his jaw, but I missed him—he was always good at gettin' away—an' then we ran into another clinch, me hammerin' his kidneys. It felt good to hammer him, an' I punched for all I was worth. But the referee broke us, an' we went into a fierce mix-up, an' he smashed me on the nose, an' it bled, an' I got him one on the mouth, an' he slammed me twice hard on the eye, an' then the bell rang.

"This fight'll never go the limit," says a feller in the press box right back o' me, an' another chap says: "The boy is good, but Moran knows too much for him."

"Keep cool, Billy," says Old Kelly, an' then we went back at it. We pounded

each other pretty bad in the second an' still worse in the third, an' when they rung time after the fourth I was tired an' sick at my stomach, an' I just wanted to go into some dark, quiet place an' lie down. "Moran'll end it this time," says the feller in the press box, an' I looked across the ring an' saw Moran grinnin' again. I hadn't see Kitty since we started, an' I wondered if she'd see me when I got the knockout, an' if she'd care, an' whatever made me think I could lick Moran, anyway.

"Play for his jaw," says Old Kelly, when I started out. "You've got to get him this time," an' then I was up against Moran again, slammin', bangin', an' gettin' banged back as though it was a boiler shop. I could hear the people yell, an' I could feel Moran's gloves thuddin' up against my ribs an' head, but I couldn't see nothin' only a sort of smoky whirl with faces into it, an' then all of a sudden they was a bang, a sort o' tearin', crashin' bang, right under my ear, an' I wobbled an' dropped. "I wonder if she seen me," I thought, as I was sinkin' down, an' just then I looked up at the window—I could just see it through the whirl an' the smoke—an' there was Kitty leanin' way in, her arms stretched out, white an' frightened an' sorry-like. I saw her there, an' things came back to me—an' I wasn't sick no more.

The referee hadn't more'n counted five when I was up. I was a little unsteady, but I was awful cool. Moran, he came at me like a bull, his arms goin' right an' left, an' the people behind yellin' for him to end it. I stood there kinder reelin'. Up in the winder was Kitty. Then Moran threw out his left to swing an' left his big square jaw wide open. I punched. I put all my weight into that punch. I put all the love I had for Kitty into it, an' it landed—full an' square it landed with a great big thud—an' Moran, he spun round on his heel an' went down like an ox. I tell you, that crowd yelled. The next I knew they was helpin' me out o' the ring, an' Old Kelly was sayin': "Beeyootiful, boy, beeyootiful! You copped him just right, an' he ain't come to yet."

"Did I win?" says I.

"Win!" says he. "You near killed him. Oh, that was a lovely punch."

Well, they took me back into the dressin'-room an' shook hands with me some more, an' put a piece o' plaster over my eye, an' fixed me up in general, an' then the manager come in an' told me I was all right, an' give me the hundred—all in fives, it was—an' it did look good. I split the hundred up an' give twenty-five to the fellers that helped me train—Old Kelly he wouldn't take nothin'—an' then I shook the crowd an' lit out for home, without waitin' to hunt up Kitty. Fifty of the seventy-five I had left I give to mother. She was sittin' up for me, an' she took on terrible when she seen my bunged eye. She cried about my fightin', too, but she put the dough in her pocketbook, an' she God-blessed me for a good boy. Then I sneaked for Kitty. I knew where to find her.

I went along the street sort o' whistlin' with the happy way I was feelin' inside, an' thinkin' of what a nice thing it was to land Kitty an' coin an' knock Moran's beef head into a jelly all in the same night. Somehow everything seemed better an' smoother an' I commenced to think the world wasn't such a rotten joint, after all: an' I was plannin' what I'd do when I'd married Kitty an' was livin' in a home o' my own. It was an awful nice dream, an' I near walked into Kitty herself before I come out of it. She was standin' in the shadow with a big shawl wrapped round her head, an' I kissed her before either of us said a word.

"You won," she says. "'Twas great. I saw it all."

"An' I saw you," says I. "That was how I licked him."

"I wonder if he saw me," she says.

"He's seein' mighty little now," says I, an' with that I kissed her again.

Then she told me how she got the place by the window in the roof, an' I told her how glad I was she was there, an' she was sorry for my eye, an' we was both glad that Moran had been properly smashed, an' we had a great old time there together.

"How much money did you get?" says Kitty.

"A hunderd," says I.

"Only a hunderd?" says she, sort o' disappointed. "Did you bring it with you?"

"What's left of it," says I, "for I've given twenty-five to the boys that helped me get into fightin' shape, an' fifty of it went to my mother."

"To your mother?" says she, "to your mother?"—an' I'd never seen Kitty look like that before—"Where do I come in?"

"I've twenty-five left, an' I'll spend it all on you, Kitty, every cent," says I. "An' there'll be more comin' now, right along."

"More comin'," says she. "Little you know whether there'll be more comin' or not, an' you've given away more'n half of it already. Mr. Moran," says she, sort o' soft like, "would ha' given it all to me. He promised."

"He promised, did he?" says I. "He promised. You've been in with Moran all the time this was goin' on?"

"He's a good friend o' mine," says she. "An' he wouldn't ha' flung his money away on other people."

"Right you are," says I. "He'd ha' flung no money away. He'd 'a' kep' it all for his dirty self—an' his mother (if he had one) might starve before he'd help her."

"Dirty yourself," says Kitty, an' her eyes was a-snappin'. "Dirty yourself, an' if Moran heard you say that, he'd knock the block off you, even if you did lick him this night. Keep your money," says she, "an' give it to your mother an' your trainer boys, an' let me that made the match go without a new hat or any-

thing else that's decent. Thank God, Moran is a man."

"You made the match?" says I, for I cared little for the rest.

"I egged the two of you on to fight," says she. "You'd sell sugar in a grocery all your life, but for me."

"An' you put the two of us up to fight so there'd be money for you?" says I.

"I did," says she, "an' little good did it do me—an' Moran's whipped for the first time."

"An' I was fightin' for that," says I, an' somethin' big an' hard came up inside my throat. "Kitty," says I, "good-by to you, an' may you go to Moran an' be—an' be blessed," says I. An' with that I went down the street on the run for fear I'd stop to think.

I told Old Kelly about it afterward when he was wonderin' what made me so glum an' grouchy like. "'Tis the way of women," he says, "an' the way of the fightin' game. You fight for 'em," he says, "an' they throw you down. An' all the gang, be it trousers or petticoats, that mixes up in the punchin' business is the same. There's no square deal to it," he says. "It's all fixed referees an' faked stakes. But you're a good boy," he says, "an' if you stick to it you'll make money."

An' I didn't want to go back to the grocery, so I stuck to it. I've whipped every man I've been up against, an' I'm the champion lightweight with money in the bank, an' a lot of heelers to lick my boots if I ask 'em. But I'm sick o' the whole thing an' I'm goin' to quit. It's no good. It's never been no good to me since I licked Tom Moran an' Kitty Maloney welched.



THE TOP OF THE HEAP

By Edgar Saltus

"BLIND obedience and the truth. That's what I want from you. Nothing else."

Mr. Beamish, as he spoke, glared imperially. There are men whom it is more agreeable to avoid than to meet. Mr. Beamish had succeeded in becoming one of them. He was fat, and quite as fascinating as vulgarity and a French tailor could make him. What a French tailor can accomplish in that line exceeds the powers of prose. Yet, though fat, he was forceful, and if vulgar, valiant. It was obvious that he had seen worse days. It was equally obvious that he never intended to see them again.

It was his son whom he addressed. The room, large, oblong, furnished in red, tropically hot on this mid-May noon, had the tawdriness of a Paris hotel written all over it. Through an open window the sun lurched. Beyond were the Tuileries. From below came the cries of the hawkers that are never still: "*Le Matin! Demandez le Matin!*"

"Now disobey me if you dare——"

The boy made a face. He was rather good looking, and quite athletic.

"Disobey you! Disobey a father who is a phenomenon, a father with thirty million and three chins! What do you take me for? But how do you know she won't object?"

"Because she does what her mamma wishes."

"But I don't see why her mamma should wish anything of the kind, or, for that matter, you either."

"You don't, eh? I am decently fixed, am I not? I did the fixing myself, didn't I? What did I do it for? Why do you suppose that after mining in Montana I monkeyed with Morgan, rolled

Rockefeller, and got ahead of Gates? For the fun of it? There is no fun in a job like that. To donate libraries? That is Carnegie's patent. I want to splurge. In that new house of mine on Fifth Avenue I want to give cotillions and dinner dances—cotillions with automobiles and Russian sables for favors, dinner dances with government bonds for boutonnières. I want to be top of the heap."

"Noble ambition."

"And why not? Supposing I am self-made. I am as rich as Croesus, whoever he may be, and just as good as the rest of them. The trouble is that in New York I don't know anybody—except from ten to three. Out of Wall Street I am seven-eighths offered and nothing bid. But here it is different. On this side people who have position don't seem to be as much afraid of losing it as they are at home. You have noticed that yourself, haven't you?"

The young man yawned and nodded.

"Anyway," Mr. Beamish resumed, "that's been the case with the Finsburys. They are bankrupt, it is true, but they are not bounders, and provided I produce enough they are willing that you should marry their daughter and take her back to New York. There all you will have to do is to fill my house with the smart set. And they'll come, too; they'll come on a run when they find a duke's daughter is there to receive them."

"But what if I don't like the girl?"

Mr. Beamish stood up and reached for a hat. "You have got to like her," he answered, shortly. "Come. It's time for business. Ring the bell, and see if the auto is ready."

The auto was. And presently, after

a series of touf toufs, a whizz up the Champs Élysées, a bolt into the Avenue Marceau, father and son were let into the drawing-room of an *appartement meublé*, a miniature *salon*, cream and gold, and tenderly pink, where loomed a dowager, robust and rancid, flanking a tall, large-mouthed, small-eyed girl.

"Duchess, this is my son Harry," Mr. Beamish began, and, plucking at his collar, and finding it moist, mopped himself abundantly.

The duchess assumed an expression of great amiability. "My daughter, the Lady Angelica," she announced, with a wave of her fan, and with another, she added: "I am so sorry Finsbury is not in. But he has a perfect mania for going to the dentist's, and that, I think, shows so much conscientiousness. Do sit down."

The girl had moved to a sofa. Harry took a seat at her side. Mr. Beamish and the duchess ranged themselves opposite.

"Warm day," said the fat man. At once he and his hostess lost themselves in cognate reflections.

"Do you like Paris?" Harry asked of the girl, who just raised her eyes to his. "I prefer London. But New York is good enough for me. You have never been there, have you?"

The Lady Angelica flushed, her eyes flickered, her lips half parted, then, as though by a sheer effort of will, her mouth shut tight. What she meant by the mummery Harry could not tell. But he took it for British reserve.

"Yes," Harry continued, indifferently, "New York is a mighty nice place. We make a specialty of tall houses, high winds, beautiful manners, ready-made clothes, and pretty girls. It is all due to the climate, I believe. Did I understand you to say that you had been there?"

"My daughter," the duchess overloudly interrupted, "has not traveled much; she——"

Harry turned. His father was contemplating a cupid on the ceiling. The duchess seemed to have one eye on him, the other on Angelica.

"She is only recently out of the

schoolroom, you know, and—— Come here, Posey!"

Suddenly from somewhere, presumably from under the sofa, there filtered the cry of a cat.

"Come here, Posey, Posey, Posey." And the duchess leaning forward, snapped her fingers enticingly.

Mr. Beamish stood up. Harry also was arising; the girl, too. Previously flushed, now she was pale.

"They seem to have forgotten to give poor little Posey his breakfast," the duchess added, in smiling explanation. "But you are not going, are you? Finsbury will be so sorry. Yet, why not dine with us to-morrow, just a plain family dinner at eight, and afterward my little girl can show you her water colors. She fairly detests water colors, and that, I think, shows such a pure mind."

"To-morrow, I am afraid," Harry interjected, but his father managed to kick him.

"He will be proud to come. But how about to-day? Couldn't you both lunch with us at Paillard's? My auto can take you there and back in a jiffy."

"That is my brother's stepdaughter," the duchess remarked to Harry, who was examining a photograph on the mantle. "Do you think she resembles Lady Essex? So many do."

Harry moved closer to the picture. The duchess seized the opportunity to whisper to Mr. Beamish behind her fan. In a moment Harry turned.

"We shall love to," the duchess resumed. "Lunching at Paillard's will be quite an escapade. But we won't trouble you to bring us back. Our brougham can fetch us. And you won't mind waiting a moment, while we put on our hats? Angelica!"

Trailing her daughter behind her, the duchess sailed from the room. Father and son were alone.

"Nice girl," Mr. Beamish remarked, as the door closed.

"A peach. And so chatty."

"Now see that you make up to her at luncheon. There is nothing like catching a girl on the fly."

"Give me a hundred thousand a year,

and catch her yourself, then. Matrimony, with a pretty girl at the other end, must be jolly good fun. But with her! Cæsar's ghost! It would be medicine. That's the truth."

"It is, is it? Well, I want obedience also. You may take your medicine or your walking-stick. Just say which, and be quick."

Harry glared about the room. Through its cream, and gold, and tender pink, the future surged. Divested of its garland of millions that future looked quite bleak.

Mr. Beamish stamped a foot.

"Which?"

"Medicine," the boy answered, sagaciously. "I'll be shot, though, if I don't take it in capsules."

"Don't be slangy," retorted the plutocrat, in whose phraseology capsules had no definite meaning.

"Scat!" cried Harry. "There's that beastly cat again."

From beyond there filtered anew a shrill meow. But immediately a door opened. The duchess, trailing her daughter, reappeared, and, presently, during an interchange of uplifting intellectualities, the street was reached, the auto hummed into the Champs Élysées, bowled down the avenue, and drew up at Paillard's.

The canopied terrace was filled with people of manifest distinction, with *horizontales* and *femmes du monde*, exotics and *cercleux*, *diplomats* and *rastas*. From a hall adjoining there issued the murmur of harps, the kiss of flutes, the caress of clinging measures. In the air was the savor of pineapples, the smell of orris, the odor of food and flowers, of pretty women and smart men, the atmosphere of what the French call High Life, and pronounce Hig Leaf. Mr. Beamish inhaled it voluptuously. Preceded by two *maitres d'hôtel*, he led his guests to a table.

"Do you *chauffe*?" Harry asked Angelica, when all were seated.

"Do you, Mr. Harry?" the duchess inquired, in her stead. "I have not let my little girl learn yet, but she is passionately fond of collecting postage stamps, and that, I think, shows so

much adaptability. But automobiling is very jolly, is it not?"

"It beats bridge," Harry answered. "Wouldn't you like to learn?" he continued, turning to the girl.

The Lady Angelica could not speak; her mouth was full of melon.

"That is the King of the Belgians," said the duchess, indicating a voluminously bearded old party who was being helped to a chair near by. "And is not that Mr. Astor, over there? We used to think," she continued, expansively, "that he might marry among us. But his daughter will. Our young men have such a fondness for your pretty compatriots, and that, I think, shows so much *entente cordiale*. No, Mr. Beamish, no champagne; a drop of Eau de Vals if you will. After Paget, and Essex, and Craven, and Curzon, then Marlborough, and, recently, Manchester, not to speak of my brother, who married a New Yorker, a Mrs. Morningside, of Morningside Park, a widow, with a daughter, such a dear, too, who, I fancy, will marry among us also. You know my brother, do you not, Mr. Beamish? But fair exchange, I often think, is not snobbery; is it, Mr. Harry? And does it not seem to you as though some of you young Americans should begin now, and lay siege to our lovely English girls. Thank you, a bit of the wing, nothing else."

Harry turned anew to the Lady Angelica. "How would you like to be besieged by an American?" he asked, seductively.

The girl flushed. Apparently she was about to reply, but British reserve may have prevented. She flushed afresh and looked away.

With superior tact the duchess intervened: "Tell me, Mr. Harry, is not that your ambassador over there?"

Harry turned. As he did so he heard a little plaintive cry. He turned again.

"The large, handsome man near the entrance," the duchess insistently continued, and actually pointed with her fan.

Harry was forced to turn once more. The cry was repeated, but less plaintively, in a note louder and more shrill.

Again Harry turned. Others were turning, too. The King wheeled in his chair. A *cocotte* near him put her glasses up.

Angelica's face was hid by a fan. Her thin frame shook. She seemed convulsed with laughter, with a church-like desire to conceal it, too. Mr. Beamish was examining his fork as though it were a great curiosity.

In hasty astonishment an omnibus began ferreting under the table. With the same superior tact the duchess waved him away.

"*Ce n'est rien*," she announced. "*Une petite Angora, voilà tout*. Angelica, you ought not to have brought her. Mr. Harry, would you be good enough, that is, my man out there"—as she spoke she motioned at the street—"would you mind going and fetching him. I will send Posey home by him. Poor, dear, little thing, it is the smell of *ris de veau*. She just dotes on *ris de veau*."

"And that," said Harry, in open mimic of the duchess, "shows, I think, such a candid nature."

He got from his seat and made for the entrance. But in the street he discovered that he must have misunderstood the lady. The man he fancied hers spoke no human tongue. He bothered for a moment or two with another servant, but the latter turned out to be the King's.

Harry started to go back. As he did so, he beheld the duchess entering a cab that stood a trifle beyond. Angelica was at her heels. Mr. Beamish was helping them both.

Harry hurried forward. "You are not going to take Posey home, are you?" he asked, a hand on the door. "Why, give her to me. I'll do it myself. Where is she?"

He looked from mother to daughter. Both were seated now. The girl had her veil down, but through it, at the question, he could see her mouth contract, then it opened, and from it issued a distinct meow.

Mr. Beamish slammed the door. "*Allez*," he bellowed.

Quite flabbergasted, Harry fell back. His astonishment was not unnatural.

Not until that moment had it occurred to him that the cat and the girl were one. Then, also, he had never heard a girl meow before. Yet, girls have, and will. Not often, of course, but semi-occasionally, in certain clinics—which Harry had never visited—and in certain treatises—which he had never read. To this inexperience and illiteracy his surprise was due.

"So—so, that is Posey!" he stuttered. "So that is Posey, is it?" he repeated instantly, in a voice more assured. "Well, you may marry that tomcat yourself. For I shan't," he added, defiantly. "Not for a million a month. Not for the top of the heap."

But he addressed the Champs Élysées. His words were lost in the roar of the wide, white street. Mr. Beamish had swung into an automobile, and, in derision, perhaps, was touf-toufing away.

The machine floated on and up toward the Arc, through the glittering haze, through the swarm of glittering traps. Harry watched it go. As it fled a fantasy of finance and felines formed and fluttered before him.

Then suddenly the vision of plutocracy and caterwauls faded away. A diminutive groom, impertinent yet correct, had, from the box of a brougham, swung, an inch from his toes. But it was not the boy, nor yet the brougham, nor even an obese coachman who held the reins, that had vaporized his thoughts. Within the carriage a girl sat staring straight into his face.

As his eyes mingled with her own she turned. He could see her profile. He could see, too, that he had seen it before. But where? In dream? In the Louvre? In the picture of Psyche made by Gérard? Neither the lady or her tiger gave him time to determine. A door was being opened, and she was stepping out.

Then, in the perfection of the ravishment of a frock such as perhaps Doucet alone in all the world can produce, he beheld a waist that would fit in a garter, the figure of a willis in a ballad, the incandescence of beauty beautifully bedraped.

But what was she saying? Was it the

language of Olympus, or the tongue of France, in which she was deigning to address the groom? Yet manifestly the latter understood. He was tipping his hat. And immediately, too, Harry was enlightened. In those accents which certain sections of Fifth Avenue share with Mayfair there fell from lips of silk the perfectly plain and entirely intelligible Anglo-Saxon order: "Follow me."

At once, under the chaperonage of the brougham, of the enormous coachman and diminutive groom, up the wide avenue she strolled.

The majority of women walk badly. It was a pleasure to watch this young person, and that pleasure Harry proceeded to enjoy. When she had stepped from the carriage, he had enveloped her with that look which strips from neck to knee. But she had not condescended to notice it, and now, her head erect, her nose in the air, her body unswayed, she passed along, disdainful, indifferent, and serene.

These airs affected him but mediocrally. It occurred to him that she was probably taking that promenade which succeeds the morning canter, and precedes the *divertissements* of the five o'clock, and in those *divertissements* he determined to participate. How he was to manage it he did not bother himself to ask. Once he passed her, but, of course, she did not look his way. Then he dropped behind, yet in the dropping there was not so much as the quiver of an eyelid to betoken a consciousness of his impertinence.

Women admire the brave when they do not prefer the audacious. Harry recognized the beauty of the truth of that axiom, even though he omitted to formulate it. He wanted to be devilish. He longed to. Yet how, barring downright caddishness, is it possible to be devilish with a young person, who not only offers no encouragement, but who, in addition to the chaperonage of a brougham, is chaperoning herself with airs of profound contempt?

Reflections of this order are not propitious to enterprise. Only the unexpected is. Then, precisely as it always happens in life, and sometimes in fic-

tion, the unexpected occurred. The Rue de la Boétie—seductive and significant name!—had been reached, and through the torrent of traps which of a May afternoon pours that way, the girl was attempting to cross the avenue.

Midway on that avenue is a refuge. Before she could land there a tricycle swooped suddenly. It was within an inch of her. But athletics serve one in some stead. Before that inch could be covered Harry grabbed her, lifted her off her feet, pulled her bodily back. She was in his arms, and he with calm effrontery was smiling in her face.

"Are you an heiress?" he asked. "If so, you have got to marry me. You nearly had us both run over. After telling me to follow you, too——"

"I told you nothing of the kind. I never spoke to you in my life."

Furiously she shook herself free, and angrily looked about her. But in the torrent the brougham must have been submerged. It was nowhere in sight.

"And now that you don't seem to be able to take care of yourself," Harry continued, "and, what's more, as you seem to have no one to do it for you, I propose to take you home."

"You will take yourself off," the girl retorted, with the same show of splendid anger. "I never saw you before. I never want to see you again." And her eyes, that were porcelain blue, flashed mightily.

"That's just it," Harry dulcetly interjected. "If you were not so uncharitable you would help me. I am a poor orphan, and I need assistance."

"What you need is a policeman," the girl threw back. "Now go find one, and let me alone."

Caress a panther, and it will not necessarily rend you. The girl had shown her teeth. They were royal. But now from her voice the anger had gone. From her eyes the flash had subsided. Harry noted the change, and construed it properly. *Château qui parle et femme qui écoute*. From impudent he became resolute.

"Where are you stopping?" he asked.

At the question he stared deep into her eyes. She was fragrant as only a

girl can be who has accounts all along the Rue de la Paix, and whose face is a wondering rose. As he stared at her she turned and looked much as the shipwrecked are rumored to do when in search of a sail. But in the seething maelstrom of the avenue, only tearing tilburys, scudding Stanhopes, and fleeting phaetons were discernible. The brougham was nowhere in sight, and helplessly she sighed and smiled.

"Across the way, at the Albe," she answered at last, the point of her tongue just visible.

"Hurry, then, here's a chance." And without further preliminaries, yet with two fingers on her elbow, Harry propelled her through a channel which a sergent-de-ville had conveniently engineered.

"You know," he added, when ultimately the opposite shore was reached, "that when they run you down here they fine you, too. That is the reason of my solicitude."

"Then your solicitude may cease. This is my hotel. If you presume to follow me any further, there will be somebody to show you the door."

"Why, I can see it from here, and a very fine door it is. Would you wish me to examine it more in detail?"

But at this he raised his hat. A cab had rattled up, and a gray-bearded Englishman, who had got from the cab, was addressing the girl.

"You are just in time," she exclaimed. "Lord Chudleigh, let me introduce a gentleman—whom I do not know." And, with an expression that succeeded in being both diabolic and demure, she passed into the *porte cochère*.

Harry's eyes accompanied her. Then, with a look of entire sweetness, he turned:

"Yes, there's the devil of it. I haven't the honor of knowing her, either. A locomotor was pouncing upon her a moment ago, and I took the liberty of saving her life. My name is Beamish," he added, modestly.

"Hello! No relation to Josiah T.?"

"Unfortunately, his son."

"Hello! Why unfortunately?"

"Oh, for a hundred reasons. I'll skip

two or three. He wants me to marry. Wants, did I say? He is holding me up."

"That's Josiah T. all over. He wants what he wants more than all others that want it, too. But, never mind. I'll have a talk with him. One good turn deserves another. Meanwhile, you might come in and give us all the facts in your melancholy case. My daughter must be expecting them. Yes?"

"Why, you are a brick," Harry exclaimed. "I had an idea, though, that your daughter was an American."

"Yes? This way."

Then, presently, Harry found himself *au premier*, in a canary-colored *salon*, staring again at the prettiest little girl in the world. She seemed but indifferently surprised to see him, and but indifferently interested in the rather delayed introduction which ensued.

"Yes," added Lord Chudleigh, when that ceremony had been effected. "You might give him some tea. And some tears, too, Maud. Unless he marries somebody or other he will be cut off with a million. Yes. I'll be back directly."

"He is a brick," Harry announced, as the door closed. "I just told him so. Now I may add that you are an angel."

"And I may remark that you are very presuming."

The girl was seated in a low chair. Her hat was gone, her gloves, too. She was playing with her fingers, the sunlight shutting her hair, an image of Caprice retouched by Doucet. "And so you are to be married, are you?"

"I hope I am," Harry, with sudden rapture, replied. "I would marry tomorrow if you would have me. Marry to-morrow!" he interrupted himself to exclaim; "I would marry right now."

"Nonsense, you are to do as you are told. Who is the lady?"

"An escaped lunatic."

The girl nodded, with curious sympathy. "You poor thing," she murmured. "No wonder I thought you needed protection. And you are such a dear," she added, absently. "I do think it a shame."

Harry moved closer. "Am I a dear?" he asked, in a little innocent voice. "Tell me that I am."

"You are a very enterprising young man, that's what you are," she cried, releasing a hand he had caught. "Can't you behave?"

But already Harry had retreated. From without there had come the sound of familiar voices, punctuated by an equally familiar wail.

"As I am a sinner," he gasped; "there's that tomcat!"

"Don't be ridiculous. It is only some relatives of mine. By the way, didn't I see you this afternoon helping them into a cab?"

Harry, unnerved, unmanned, undone, was too abject for reply. The door had opened, and before him a horrible trio: the duchess, her daughter, and his father, stood.

"Hello!" and through a lateral entrance a bearded face emerged.

"Yes, Chudleigh, it is I," the duchess announced. "The butler fell dead, and while he was being removed Angelica suggested coming here, and that, I think, showed such a sweet disposition."

"Seraphic! But where did you pick up Beamish?"

"Oho," said the fat man, "I stopped in for tea at your sister's, and, when the butler dropped dead, as the duke was at the dentist's——"

"And if that isn't Mr. Harry," the duchess interrupted. "Angelica, did you see Mr. Harry?"

Harry, at the moment, was crossing the room.

"How did you get here?" Mr. Beamish, in a hurried whisper, hoarsely inquired of him, and as hoarsely continued: "Don't you know that—er—that little fascination of our friend is but a slight nervous affection, which only shows itself when she is excited, and which, anyway, matrimony will cure?"

"When who is excited?" Maud had surged, a hand extended. "Mr. Beamish, since every one has forgotten to introduce us, I am Miss Morningside."

"We were talking, Miss Morningside," the plutocrat answered, with a

bow, which he executed as though it were a feat, "we were talking of your charming connection, the Lady Angelica, and I was asking this young man if he knew that she had consented to marry me. Yes, Me. We settled it just before the butler——"

But the sentence was never completed. Harry exploded:

"Great Cæsar!" he cried. "I don't wonder the poor devil dropped dead. But isn't that too jolly?" he added, turning to Maud. "We will be connections, too."

"What? What's all this about matrimony?" Lord Chudleigh called out. "I say, Beamish, you mustn't ballyrag that boy into marrying any one of your choosing. Give him his head."

"Thank you, Lord Chudleigh," Harry called back. "But I wish you would give me your daughter, instead."

"His stepdaughter," the duchess severely corrected. "Before her mother married my brother she had lost her first husband, and that, I think, showed so much *savoir faire*."

Apparently, Lord Chudleigh did too. "What?" he exclaimed. "Give you Maud?"

"He saved my life," the young woman serenely suggested.

"Hello! So he did! So he did! Pulled you out from under a runaway baby carriage, I believe. Beamish, what do you say?"

"What do I say?" answered the stock rigger, who, with Wall Street agility, had calculated to an eighth the value which this new vista of smartness unrolled, and who, in one swift, rapt vision, beheld in his house a duke's daughter handing out grand pianos and polo ponies by way of cotillon favors, and an earl's stepdaughter distributing diamond collars and four-in-hands. "What do I say? Why, it rather strikes me that we'll corner the market; that we'll be top of the heap."

"And that," said the duchess, "shows, I think——"

Yet what it showed to the duchess no one seemed to heed. A *maitre d'hôtel*, preceding a footman, weighed down

with tea things, had entered the *salon* and was supervising their arrangement in a corner of the room.

During the progress of these solemnities, Harry, who had been standing in the embrasure of a window with the prettiest little girl in the world, edged over to his father again.

"Did I understand you to stay that that little fascination of the Lady Angelica only manifests itself when she is excited?"

"Well, what of it?"

"Miss Morningside and I have been talking it over, and we have decided on a wedding present for her, which, we think, may be of use."

Mr. Beamish sniffed with sudden suspicion. "You are getting devilish thoughtful of others. What is it?"

"A nice little cage!"

"And it is thoughtful of us, isn't it?"

Harry remarked, as a trifle overhastily, perhaps, he returned to where Miss Morningside stood.

"Yes, indeed; but let us think of ourselves," that young woman answered, whereupon her hand was openly squeezed.

"Hello!" cried Lord Chudleigh. "What's all this? Maud, come out of that window and pour the tea."

"Yes," said Mr. Beamish, "we don't want any more waiters falling dead. One is enough on a day like this. Isn't it?" he added, turning to Angelica.

And the duke's daughter, looking down at the carpet, blushed, as she answered:

"Meow."



THE WOMAN I LOVE

By Douglas Story

MODERN Love climbs but charily to my housetop. There is no elevator, and the stairway is old and ill-lighted, intimidating to fashionable gowns and draperies.

Arrived at my eyrie, there is little to satisfy the twentieth century Cupid. It is a place of vantage, not an exhibition ground.

From it one surveys the world—a plateau of roofs fissured by intersecting streets and avenues—but is oneself invisible to the crowd below. Love in these rarified altitudes must be sufficient to itself, indifferent to the applause as to the envy of a vigilant humanity. So it comes that I am much alone with myself and with my Theory of Love.

It has seemed to me that, in the beginning, there were a Man and a Woman. And these two were all in all to each other. Every spiritual atom in the one found its complement in the composition of the other. So that their

souls were satisfied; and the male and the female together made one being—an entity in the image of God.

With time, and the pilfering of the Tree of Knowledge, the perfection of the equation was destroyed. One soul overlapped the other. Certain atoms in the psychical constitution of the one were left unsatisfied by the other—a crevasse had opened between Man and Woman, a rift had appeared in the lute. Then was Love born. And Love was but the soul-hunger of mankind for the at-oneness it once had enjoyed. To attain that absolute apposition of two souls is to reach Heaven; to be re-assimilated in the great Ego from which we have been broken off; to re-enter Nirvana; to become immersed in the Universal Soul.

Since Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden no two beings thus have regained Paradise. To-day the children of these two number a billion and a

half. In each of these is some tiny atom of the first Man and the first Woman. Until these atoms are all again assembled within a single pair, Love will remain an unsatisfied heart-hunger, a groping after a perfect union. And yet, each man believes that in one woman is contained all of his soul's desire; each woman dreams that one man exists who can satisfy her whole heart's hunger.

All men are necessary to the composition of Man. Carlyle has recalled that there is a legend from the days of Osiris, and Isis, and Typhon, of how the gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men that he might be more helpful to himself; just as the hand was split up into fingers. Had he pursued his idea farther he would have realized that no human being is in himself an entity, a complete unit. He would have found that each of us is, at best, but a fraction of an individual demanding a fraction of the apposite sex with which to combine in making an integral being. Therein lies the mystery of Love, the meaning of marriage.

All of me hungers for Love, yearns for sympathy. Each atom of my spiritual being aches with longing for an atom in another soul that will understand its need, will complement its imperfection. Wherever such atoms of sympathy are found, bonds of affection are established; where they are many, Love takes the place of affection; where they are paramount, Love becomes Passion. The greater the number of the atoms in the Man's soul which find their affinity in the atoms of the Woman's soul, the closer will be the alliance, the more lasting will be the union. But the curse which was uttered in Eden has ordained that in the atoms which remain unsatisfied is laid up each one's Purgatory.

Emerson has written that "the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and

the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie, an immensity not possessed, and that cannot be possessed. When it breathes through the intellect it is genius; when it breathes through the will it is virtue; when it flows through the affection it is love."

Had he applied the atomic theory to the soul, Emerson would have learned why men, otherwise honorable, are frequently perfidious in love. He would have discovered why the immortals among men—Goethe, Shelley, Byron, George Sand, Sappho, Wagner, Rubens, Vandyck, Cleopatra, Napoleon—were rarely people of a single devotion. They were folk of too universal a sympathy, of too complex a nature, easily to be satisfied with a mate. Their souls were not completely overlaid by those they had chosen out of the Cosmos. The atoms left unsatisfied sought their own affinities through space.

To find a counterpart to a complex soul is a matter of much hard seeking. Those of the great ones who did not succeed in their search failed because of the delicacy of their perceptions. They were betrayed into the belief that in the other was all they hungered after, when in the other was but an insignificant part of their soul's need. Of such are the tragedies of Love.

There has been little in a life's experience to make me dissatisfied with the idea of a transmigration of souls. Wholly without thought of a dogmatized religion it has pleased me to think of the first man's soul—infinately divided among the myriad bodies of his descendants—seeking ever its first love, the Eve of Eden. It has seemed to me that this soul caught at the souls of Ruth and Rebekah, and cleaved to them. Realizing the lack of some quality the perfect soul had possessed, it reached out for the loves of Mary of Magdala and Helen, only to depart once more unsatisfied. The pure souls of St. Elizabeth and St. Martha were unable to comfort it. The warlike hearts of Boadicea and Joan of Arc did not relieve it of its longing. The devotion of Hero, the passion of Juliet, did not avail to content it. Women excelled at most

in a single attribute. The soul hungered for a mate that should be transcendent in all. It did not know that all women are necessary to the composition of Woman. In its despair it joined itself to many unworthy souls, and so completed Man's damnation.

And yet I, and every healthily constituted man, know one soul in which repose all the virtues—a pure, white soul, and its name is the name of the Woman I love. He who has mastered it in its entirety has mastered all that is or can be born into this world. If I do not compass all of its love, the reason is a lack of sympathy in myself, a weakening of my soul's perception by convention, a strangulation of Love by Desire. All of love is open to every one of us, and he who seizes upon it earns his entrance to Heaven. My Theory of Love is in itself a paradox.

There is a step on my creaking stairway—the step of the Woman I love. Through her, God grant, I enter Heaven!

The Woman I love is tall, and straight, and strong-limbed, walking with an assured step, meeting my level gaze with calm, wide-opened eyes. Above all things is she healthy; and, being healthy, she is honest. To me that same health is a virtue preëminent above all virtues, a panacea against all immoralities. Ill-health is the gate to the divorce court, to the sanitarium, to the madhouse, and the prison. Through it pass more tortured women of to-day than it boots to enumerate. Health is the wicket opening upon Love, Happiness, and Heaven. It is narrow and jealously guarded, and but few of the present generation have kept strict key upon it.

If it be true that the wages of sin is death, equally certain is it that sin is the offspring of hysteria. By sin I would not be interpreted as meaning merely those breaches of an arbitrary decalogue whose dicta suffice as the foundation of a police code. To me the unforgivable crimes are other things—gossipings, scandals, flirtations, falsehoods, and broken troths—the whole treacherous brood of domestic infidelities. These,

to me, are worse than the murderings of men. They are slayings of the soul, not mere breakings of the body. I had rather my enemy stabbed a barbed assegai into my heart, than that he killed my faith in the Woman I love.

Yet is the whole of modern society poisoned with this same insincerity. The wife of one's bosom flirts with the physician, the lawyer, the very curate if he be available. She seeks their sympathy, makes complaint of her husband's incompatibility, rails at his incomprehension. It is a sign of the times, a manifestation of our twentieth century unrest, an indication of the overstrain. The doctor, trained to an understanding of her neurasthenia, shuts his eyes to his diagnosis, neglects the simple hygienic precautions necessary to a cure, pampers his patient's hallucination, confirms her in her hysteria. To the lawyer her symptoms are so many forerunners to a fee. To the priest her complaints are the text for a sermon, the basis for attack upon the non-churchgoing husband, the reason for countenancing the first feeble flickerings of her infidelity. The woman, unconsciously sick, deems herself a martyr to an uncongenial union, feverishly hunts for consolation.

Women hunger for sympathy—American women more eagerly than their European sisters. The explanation is evident. Women are high-strung, emotional. They depend upon others for their strength, their spiritual maintenance. Such support they rarely receive from the American husband. He is a man of business, living his days in Wall Street, spending his nights at the club or in the hotel. It matters not that the proceeds of his labor go to the dressing and the decorating of his wife.

These are material evidences of affection that influence but little the womanly woman. She longs for companionship in her intellectual groping, yearns for guidance in her spiritual expansion. From the ordinary man of figures and calculation these are not forthcoming. He has bartered his intellect for the silk and diamonds of his wife's apparel. In finding these he has lost the finer senti-

ments of his nature, the better part of his being, the quality the feminine soul most passionately demands. She sinks back abashed by her failure, seeks elsewhere the support she has been denied where most naturally she sought it.

Then intervene the matinee idol, the musician, the religious eccentric, the entire noxious company of advertised sentimentalists. For the most part the relationship between the woman hungering for an affinity and the man of professional emotions is distant as the stall from the stage, innocuous, insipid. The woman sits in the darkness of the auditorium and speculates upon the passion behind the footlights. It is an impersonal thing, affecting her merely reflexly. Occasionally the proscenium is crossed, and there eventuate the mental infidelities that culminate in scandal. The woman has sought in the exaggerations of a spurious sentimentality the antidote to the excessive materialism of her home. She has sold for a mess of affectation her birthright of love, and respect, and mutual understanding.

Much of this is the outcome of neurasthenia, of a supersensitive intellectuality. The women of the cities have too little sleep, too little exercise, too little repose. They live at the limit of their nervous energy, with their bodies racked by the whirl of the street, by the agitation of the traffic, by the shock of the contractors' explosions. Physicians prescribe drugs to women starving for lack of air, make invalids out of the healthy, automaniacs out of the mentally sane. The absence of honesty at the first setting forth is responsible for our crowded hospitals, our congested asylums. Our women live in a whirl of gayety that is unknown to the people of Paris and London. European society is content with a single season, American society demands at least four seasons in its year—one in New York, one in Tuxedo, one in Europe, one in Newport. From the wear and tear our women have no respite, are old at thirty-five, are superannuated in mid-life. There is no space on the American continent for a Bournemouth, or a Dinard, or a St. Moritz.

To me the matter of supreme importance is the preservation of health in the Woman I love. Her health is my happiness, my self-respect, my hope of Heaven. Let her maintain her bodily tone, and she will continue to uphold the honor of my household, the reputation of my name, the sanctity of my family. Let her lose it, and she will be a prey to every cunning trickster who can force his way into her circle. Romeo, listening to the voice of Juliet, cried: "It is my soul that calls upon my name!" So to me is the Woman I love. In the radiance of her presence I hope to attain eternal happiness. She is my soul, the supreme essence, the real Ego. As Plutarch said, her words are "enamed in fire," burned into my being. If they proceed from her healthily instincts then shall I deserve a place with the gods. If they come from a diseased imagination then shall I be condemned to an eternity with the fiends. It rests with me so to nurture the best within her that together we may see God.

It is true, as the placid philosopher of Concord wrote, that "in the particular society of his mate the lover attains a clearer sight of any spot, any taint which her beauty has contracted from this world, and is able to point it out, and this with mutual joy that they are now able, without offense, to indicate blemishes and hindrances in each other, and give to each all help and comfort in curing the same. And beholding in many souls the taint which it has contracted in the world, the lover ascends to the highest beauty, to the love and knowledge of the Divinity, by steps on this ladder of created souls." To my comprehension, there are no blemishes on the fair skin of the Woman I love. As she rests beside me, she is beautiful, pure, unspotted from the world; as my hand steals into her little hand, and I register a vow that if love, and faith, and intercommunion avail anything, it will be my life's work to prevent the entrance of aught that will injure her. In the affairs of the soul, as in the things of the body, prevention is better than cure.

WHEN TO WRITE FINIS

By Helen S. Crowninshield

ROME.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: So you have returned from your trip to the Grecian Isles and are at Naples. I envy you the experience.

At this moment you may be pressing, in your Bædeker, a leaf gathered from Virgil's tomb, or buying the palest pink corals on the Chiaja, or dropping a cent into the lava of Vesuvius, which your guide will extract, with an in-crustated setting, and hand to *la bella Signorina Americana*. Your poetic soul will expand as you sit in the moonlight by the Bay of Naples—especially if that Apollo-like Professor B——n is with you.

It must be inspiring for one on your mission to visit the museum with the first authority on sculpture, and with your exquisite tact, and a well-timed question like "How do you, Professor, account for the fact that some men in our own generation resemble Greek gods?" (this with an upward glance of your violet eyes). You will undoubtedly persuade him to transfer some treasure, belonging to the government, to your collection!

Have you written the sonnet, on the Hercules, you needed to complete your volume? I am glad that your father, the Colonel, remained in Sienna. I remember when we were in Venice—that my husband persisted in floating about in a gondola with me—it was when I was writing that Venetian Romance of the fifteenth century, and much as I desired his company at other times, he was so out of period in his English clothes with an American newspaper always spread open before him, that I could make no headway with my story until he con-

tracted a cold, which kept him in the house for some weeks.

Of course I know that the Colonel is interested in all that you write, but I can never forget his having advised that young girl who was studying sculpture in Rome last winter not to visit the Vatican for fear of losing her originality.

Katharine arrived safely with the Swards and looks well. She has no idea of my disappointment in not joining you at Naples, and I shall not tell her. A daughter of seventeen needs a mother everywhere, but in Italy her presence is a necessity. She is really very pretty.

Let me hear from you soon, and tell me if anything of a romantic nature occurs, for where you are there should always be a warning sign of "Danger!" Moreover, I need copy.

Ever affectionately,

NATALIE.

ROME, VIA VENTI SETTEMBRE.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: We are finally settled in the Palazzo Udini. The Swards are on the same floor, but on the courtyard, which is not as pleasant. Our windows overlook the Ministry of War, and, as I have a weakness for soldiers, I shall find plenty of opportunity for indulging in it. I laughed at the way you turned the tables on me. Do you happen to remember that I am married and forty-five? I never mention this fact to any one, and I think that the man who first computed time by years (of course it was a man, a woman would have had more tact) should have died "unwept, unhonored and unsung." Frankly, I think, that I look about

thirty-five, at a little distance perhaps, and being so blonde I attract attention here where nearly all the women are dark. The Judge seems to think that it is my fault if a man looks at me. It is but a custom. A very sedate friend who has lived in Rome for several years told me that once, during her walk, she noticed that not a man looked at her, which was so unusual that as soon as she entered her room she ran to the mirror to see if her youth and beauty had suddenly vanished, and although she could detect no change her self-confidence had been completely destroyed by the experience. No, my dear, I have lived my day. I wonder, by the way, at just what age a woman should write *Finis* to such pastime?

We hope to be asked to visit you at villa Capriano, Sienna, for the *fêtes* of August. They are unique and I should be sorry to miss them.

It was good of the Griccioli to call so that she might tell you of my exact condition. I have but a cold. The newspapers greatly exaggerated my accident. I merely slipped from a rock into Lake Nemi, as Lanciani was pointing out the spot where the remains of the ancient galleys lie buried in impenetrable mud. Fortunately, the water was shallow where I fell, so that my friends—the duchess was with us—quickly helped me out, and, after a short rest, and change of clothes, at the Castle, we drove to Rome, none the worse for the incident, except that a slight cold has developed. Was it not lucky that Laura's clothes fitted me? I did not attempt to commit suicide, but I did spoil my new French dress!

Ever affectionately,

NATALIE.

P. S.—While writing the above I have noticed an unusually handsome young officer in a window of the Ministry of War opposite. He seems to have an opera glass and to be watching me attentively, but I dare not flatter myself!

ROME.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: I received your letter from Sorrento. I supposed that

you were passing the day with the Freemans, although you never mentioned them.

We are glad that you have thought better of our bringing Joseph with us, and we will leave for Sienna as soon as the doctor consents. I am nearly well, though still confined to my room. But a truce to illness and doctors, for I have something to confide to you which will amuse you far more.

For the last few days I have noticed that that young officer, of whom I wrote in my last letter, seems to have no more important duty than standing at the window opposite and gazing at me. Of course, the distance is somewhat great, still I can see him and his uniform quite distinctly, although I can not make out his rank. I am not very familiar with the insignia of officers, and I would ask the Judge if he were not in Florence. But, my dear, I certainly did see him, a short time since, making signs to me. Of course, I pretended to be looking in quite another direction and soon left the window; but it was strange, was it not? He cannot be over twenty-five and he reminds me of Prince Esterfeld.

I suppose that I am an old fool, but this incident has cheered me considerably. No wonder that foreign women keep young!

Did you see in the *Italie* that Mrs. Stuart has married that boy I had in mind for Katharine? She is to be presented at court next week, but I shall send her with our Ambassadress to save myself the expense of a new gown.

Salute the Freemans for us. When are you coming to Rome?

Ever affectionately,

NATALIE.

ROME.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: Just a line to tell you that Katharine's presentation was a success, and I think that she was most fortunate, for there are to be no more this season. The court leaves Rome in a few days.

We have suffered very little with the heat, and the Judge says that Rome is not at all a bad place in which to pass the summer. As a matter of fact, the

mercury seldom touches 90 degrees, but it is always warm. One day is just like another, with a cloudless sky and no rain. It is the continuous heat which wilts, but does not consume as in America. Every one drives to the villas at five o'clock and then to hear the music in the square, where they take ices, of course, or else they go outside the walls to some restaurant, or friend's villa, or to Frascati, and there are theatres and the clubs. It all sounds pleasant, but it is hard for one who loves Italy as I do to be counted out, and I am much alone and rather bored. Katharine is with the Bandini at Porto d'Anzio. But to return to her presentation. I must not forget to tell you of an amusing incident connected with it. It seems that one requires a liveried man-servant to accompany one, and they wait in the hall of the Quirinal in full view of the guests. We were only told of this an hour before they were to leave. Such a panic ensued, for our man wears only ordinary black clothes, as you know. Fortunately the maid knew a woman who-kept liveries to let and, as she lives over her shop, we were able at that late hour—9 P. M.—to hire one from her. When Joseph appeared in it we were convulsed with laughter, as it was several sizes too large and the coat tails dragged on the floor; he had turned up the legs of the trousers and the hat covered his eyes! Maria, poor old soul, was not discouraged; she threaded her needle and took a tuck in the coat tails, then a hem in the legs of the trousers, and finished by folding a newspaper in the lining of the hat. When he accompanied Katharine and Maria down the stairs to the carriage—they were to join the Ambassador's carriage at the Embassy—I thought he was more appropriately dressed for an opera comique than for a royal palace.

No sooner were they out of sight than the bell rang and the cook brought me an enormous bouquet with a note demanding an immediate answer, saying that a small boy had come with it from the Ministry of War across the way and was to take back the reply. I

shall always congratulate myself upon the dignity I displayed in handing back the flowers and the note to the cook to be returned to my officer. I cannot help wishing that I knew what was in that note. I suppose that he had assured himself that I was alone—the Judge is still in Florence.

Ever affectionately,

NATALIE.

FRASCATI.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: The months are rolling along as if they were going down hill on castors. It is appalling. When I was young I did not mind, for I was sure that something better was in store for me. Now I know that the reverse is the case. Not that I am pessimistic, far from it; but I have learned my limitations. I have less enthusiasm, less health, less money, imagination, beauty and charm; and with the loss of all these attractions I have lost the power of attracting. The Judge calls this self-analysis the "result of a sluggish liver," and for that reason we are here again taking all our favorite walks.

You know my tastes and haunts well enough to be sure that we are in the *Villa Conti*, under the ilex trees, where Cicero walked and thought, where the nightingales sing, and dozens of fountains splash their sparkling waters, and the oleanders and roses vie with each other for supremacy of beauty. The students of Mont Dragone file slowly by, and a military band is playing in the distant *piazzetta*, while far beyond, over the olive trees, which seem to lie like anchored clouds on the sunny plain, I see St. Peter's in solemn state. A painter is trying to fix all that is paintable of this scene upon a foot or two of canvas, and Katharine, who sits near me, exclaims at his audacity; while I remain silent thinking that I have fixed it for all time upon a much smaller canvas—my heart. Nothing will ever efface it. It will live with me always and will be the last intrinsic part of me to die.

Please bring your Neapolitan visit to an end. You are giving too much time to the worship of those cold statues in the museum. Hurry to Rome before

you have lost all interest in the warm affection of your living and responsive friend,

NATALIE.

P. S.—If I had expected to rid myself of the Roman officer's attentions by coming to Frascati I have been disappointed, for he was on the train by which we came here, and only this morning I saw him under my window. He seemed to be sauntering up and down, as though he were expecting some one, and he held my sunshade in his hand! I had left it on the steps last evening. I asked Maria to get it from him, but she refused, and perhaps she was right. Still I do hope that he will not take it back to the Ministry of War!

Ever, N.

ROME.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: The news that you were on your way to Sienna, without stopping to see me in Rome, was a sad disappointment; but if the Tolamei expected you to stand godmother to her son what could you do?

I am sending a friend with a letter to you. It is Venner, the painter. He wishes to see the Saracini Gallery. He knows B. of the *Accademia delle Belle Arti*; but for some reason of his own he prefers a non-professional introduction and it is difficult to obtain one, as you know.

What a pity that your publishers treated you so badly! They certainly do not belong to the *civil-service*.

My handsome officer keeps up his impertinences, and although they really amuse me I am growing nervous. He stood throwing kisses to me yesterday, though I sat at quite a distance from the window, and Maria, who happened to come into the room just then, saw him too, and declared that she should tell the Judge, for there was no knowing what the man would do next. She takes advantage of her age and long service to treat me like a child.

Last evening he had put a light behind the shade and on the shade he had pasted, or painted, a huge heart. What do you suppose he meant? Any one

would think from his audacity that I had given him some encouragement, whereas I never gave him the least. All the same I am glad that the Judge was not in the room, for you know that he goes armed, both figuratively and in reality, against these poor Italians. Maria says that my new tea-gown is a dream of beauty, that I am irresistible in it and that she does not blame him. She thinks, however, that I should draw down the shades; but I am so dependent upon the sun.

I have not left my room since I returned from Frascati. I had no idea at the time that my little dip in the lake would have such lasting results.

The Salustri is coming to tea and I have promised to read her my Italian sketch.

I received your MS. and read it attentively. I predict that the book will be a success; but I strongly advise Everadi as the illustrator. The Hercules sonnet is the gem of the collection. I feel with you that it is difficult for a woman to treat the subject adequately, but you have set a high standard in your specialty and I doubt if you will ever write on anything half so well as on statuary.

If it is not asking too much, will you keep the tower room for me? Apart from the view down the valley to Santa Fiore it would be easier for me to escape to my room, when tired, by the tower staircase than to pass the guests in the *salons*. Then it would be pleasant to descend at any time to the groves and to the garden.

Salute the Colonel, and love me, at least, until next week.

Affectionately,
NATALIE.

ROME.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: If I had only followed Maria's advice yesterday and drawn down the shade, the very mortifying incident which I am about to relate would never have occurred. It would have put my officer in his proper place by suggesting to him that the drop curtain had, figuratively speaking, descended upon his romance and that the

play was over. On the contrary, what has happened is that Maria has brought me this note, which had no address. It began:

"*Mia Amata Biondina.* (My Beloved Blonde One.) If you can elude your jailer and escape from the old woman's vigilance long enough, do meet me in the garden of your palace at eleven o'clock this evening. I am tired of this distant admiration and must hold you in my arms to assure myself that you are made of flesh and blood. Who is the man I see occasionally at your window? Remember that there is nothing an Italian will not do when his jealousy is aroused.

"Your own PIETRO."

It seems that the janitor gave the above note to Maria early this morning, saying that a soldier had asked him to put it into her hands last evening, but he had found the apartment locked and no one had answered the bell when he rang. Now, as Maria says, she is the only *old* woman in the house, being over sixty, and as she is a pronounced brunette she can not be any one's "Blonde One," so the note must be intended for me. What shall I do? I have about made up my mind to seek the solution of the difficulty in flight, and if I do not hear from you to the contrary we will start for Sienna on Friday next.

I shall leave my room to-morrow and try a short drive with the Judge. I am afraid to trust him out of my sight a moment for fear some harm may come to him. Italians are so uncertain.

Affectionately,
NATALIE.

ROME.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: I dressed early this morning and went to Katharine's room to help her select her clothes to take to Sienna. What was my surprise to find her arranging her hair in the dark. As I went to the window to raise her shade she clutched at my arm and forbade my doing so. I insisted. She insisted. I asked for an explanation which she consented to give, provided I would not tell her father. This I promised her. Whereupon she proceeded to relate to me all my young officer's doings. Of his persecuting

her, of his following her to Frascati, of her worry of mind, as she did not like to trouble me when I was ill, and of everything, in short, which I had seen and attributed to his admiration of myself. I said that of course I should tell her father at once and ask him to go to the Department of War and complain of him. I also said that I sincerely hoped that she had not given him any encouragement. But of myself I said nothing. Do you appreciate that I am the "jailer" and the "old woman" whom he wished Katharine to "elude?" I was never so angry in my life, and I think that the Judge's estimate of Italian men is very just after all. There is no one but you in the world to whom I would confide this mortifying experience, and I hope that you will never allude to it when we meet.

Your humbled but affectionate,

NATALIE.

Poor little Katharine, what an unfortunate experience for a mere child.

ROME.

DEAREST CLAUDIA: We are all packed and have made a few farewell visits. I am very glad, after all that has happened, to leave this apartment, and I shall not come back to it next season. I do not feel that I can blame myself for anything that I have done, but my attitude of mind was so foolish. Our luggage has gone on ahead . . . Here I was interrupted by Anita, my seamstress, who wished, as I supposed, to try on my traveling dress—she is a very intelligent little Venetian dressmaker, whom I took out of charity—but her motive proved to be very different.

When I went to the sewing-room, which is between my room and Katharine's, to speak to Anita, she began with:

"Signora, my mother is in the hall. She has come to say good-by to you and to thank you for all your kindness to me during my service here, and also to tell you that I cannot go with you to Sienna, as I am to be married next week. In fact my promised husband is here too, and—" With that she threw open

the door and there stood her mother and—my handsome officer, no, Katharine's officer! Not quite so handsome seen at such short range and only a sergeant! I tried to hide my confusion as best I could, and asked him how and when and where this engagement had come about. Anita took the initiative, saying:

"Why, signora, I thought that you must have seen Pietro making love to me from across the way, I was always

begging him to be more discreet, for fear that you would send me away." Here Pietro interrupted her with a question and what do you suppose it was? Whether I would not take them both to America with me.

You may divine my answer. I will add no more except to say that I have learned "when a woman should write *Finis* to such pastimes."

Affectionately,
NATALIE.



A MAY MADRIGAL

SWEETHEART, when May comes dancing in,
And dandelion-ore is strewn
On every lawn, by every linn,
Beneath the watches of the moon,
And thrushes trill and cuckoos croon
In tender tune;

Shall we not heed the luring call
Of bird and brook, of bloom and bee?
Shall we not break each girdling thrall,
And for a little space be free?
Just Love, perchance, as company
For you and me!

You smile assent. Sweetheart, your hand!
Ours all the brooding breadth of skies;
Ours all the golden-glamoured land
That beckons us in wooing wise;
Methinks for one day paradise
Before us lies!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

OCTOBER AND JUNE

By S. H. Peters

THE Captain gazed gloomily at his sword that hung upon the wall. In the closet near by was stored his faded uniform, stained and worn by weather and service. What a long, long time it seemed since those old days of war's alarms!

And now, veteran that he was of his country's strenuous times, he had been reduced to abject surrender by a woman's soft eyes and smiling lips. As he sat in his quiet room he held in his hand the letter he had just received from her—the letter that had caused him to wear that look of gloom. He re-read the fatal paragraph that had destroyed his hope.

"In declining the honor you have done me in asking me to be your wife, I feel that I ought to speak frankly. The reason I have for so doing is the great difference between our ages. I like you very, very much, but I am sure that our marriage would not be a happy one. I am sorry to have to refer to this, but I believe that you will appreciate my honesty in giving you the true reason."

The Captain sighed, and leaned his head upon his hand. Yes, there were many years between their ages. But he was strong and rugged, he had position and wealth. Would not his love, his tender care, and the advantages he could bestow upon her make her forget the question of age? Besides, he was almost sure that she cared for him.

The Captain was a man of prompt action. In the field he had been distinguished for his decisiveness and energy. He would see her and plead his cause again in person. Age!—what was it to come between him and the one he loved?

In two hours he stood ready, in light

marching order, for his greatest battle. He took the train for the old Southern town in Tennessee where she lived.

Theodora Deming was on the steps of the handsome, porticoed old mansion, enjoying the summer twilight, when the Captain entered the gate and came up the graveled walk. She met him with a smile that was free from embarrassment. As the Captain stood on the step below her, the difference in their ages did not appear so great. He was tall and straight and clear-eyed and browned. She was in the bloom of lovely womanhood.

"I wasn't expecting you," said Theodora; "but now that you've come you may sit on the step. Didn't you get my letter?"

"I did," said the Captain; "and that's why I came. I say, now, Theo, reconsider your answer, won't you?"

Theodora smiled softly upon him. He carried his years well. She was really fond of his strength, his wholesome looks, his manliness—perhaps, if—

"No, no," she said, shaking her head, positively; "it's out of the question. I like you a whole lot, but marrying won't do. My age and yours are—but don't make me say it again—I told you in my letter."

The Captain flushed a little through the bronze on his face. He was silent for a while, gazing sadly into the twilight. Beyond a line of woods that he could see was a field where the boys in blue had once bivouacked on their march toward the sea. How long ago it seemed now! Truly, Fate and Father Time had tricked him sorely. Just a

few years interposed between himself and happiness!

Theodora's hand crept down and rested in the clasp of his firm, brown one. She felt, at least, that sentiment that is akin to love.

"Don't take it so hard, please," she said, gently. "It's all for the best. I've reasoned it out very wisely all by myself. Some day you'll be glad I didn't marry you. It would be very nice and lovely for a while—but, just think! In only a few short years what different tastes we would have! One of us would want to sit by the fireside and read, and maybe nurse neuralgia or rheumatism of evenings, while the other would be crazy for balls and theatres and late suppers. No, my dear friend. While it isn't exactly January and May, it's a clear case of October and pretty early in June."

"I'd always do what you wanted me to do, Theo. If you wanted to——"

"No, you wouldn't. You think now

that you would, but you wouldn't. Please don't ask me any more."

The Captain had lost his battle. But he was a gallant warrior, and when he rose to make his final adieus his mouth was grimly set and his shoulders were squared.

He took the train for the North that night. On the next evening he was back in his room, where his sword was hanging against the wall. He was dressing for dinner, tying his white tie into a very careful bow. And at the same time he was indulging in a pensive soliloquy.

"'Pon my honor, I believe Theo was right, after all. Nobody can deny that she's a peach, but she must be twenty-eight, at the very kindest calculation."

For you see, the Captain was only nineteen, and his sword had never been drawn except on the parade ground at Chattanooga, which was as near as he ever got to the Spanish-American War.



THE SMILE OF THE DESERT

By Cloudesley Johns

I.

THE desert smiled, as a tiger can smile, fascinating and terrible.

It has strange beauties all its own, the desert, not only in the wonderful phantom lakes with which the heat-haze fills the dry basins where water used to be, nature's most terrible lies; there are other things. The heat-haze blots out the horizon, above which rise the tops of a group of high buttes, fifty miles away, yet plainly visible in the clear and intensely dry air; for to-day the heat-haze lies low on the plain where the temperature is barely a hundred degrees, and the upper air is quite

cool, because it is still winter and cold storms raging among the snowy peaks of the range breathe chillily over the desert.

The tops of the buttes which you can see, appear suspended in the air—mountains floating in the sky. The effect is strange and sublime. At other times you might see those yellow-blue summits of desert hills do strange tricks, soaring and advancing and retreating, or grouping themselves into stately towers and minarets, and you could imagine many things. The heat-mist sways and twists them so by forming a writhing background and throwing a flimsy and ever-changing veil before them. On

occasion they may become a city before your eyes and fountains spring high in the air, turning to iridescent spray, but this is when you are mad and will die presently, leaving your bones to be polished to a shiny whiteness when the fine sand flies in some desert wind-storm. To think of these things does not lessen your admiration of the desert, for its beauties are such as belong to the terrible.

On a dome-shaped hill, grass-grown and sprinkled with red tulips and yellow daisies, near the edge of the desert, a girl stood gazing out over the plain. Her hands were tightly clasped, and her brow was wrinkled with pain. She seemed angry at the desert smiling there.

"Cruel! Cruel!" she cried, leaning forward.

The accusation has been hurled at the ocean many a time, and the breakers answer with a sullen roar. Not so the desert. It lies unresponsive, smiling, basking in the winter sun, a great sea of heated sand, its gray waves motionless, silent.

The girl sat down on the grass, plucking the flowers around her and holding them in her lap, thinking not of the bright colors nor of what she did, but of her tragedy. It was the only one she had ever had, and, in her environment, there was little to draw her attention from it; so, through nine long months she had nursed it, brooding upon it till it became more real to her than the man that had gone away into the desert and returned no more.

She had not known him long at the time he went. Just a little while he stopped at the ranch-house which was her home, laughing at the dangers he was to face, and whimsically recounting those he had passed. And, when he was ready to start, she asked him, with more feeling than she intended to show, why he took such risks. It was not meant as a question, exactly, but he answered it, explaining that he had not known why he went before, but knew why he was going now. And he told her. Then for many days she watched the sea of sand, looking for her love to return to

her across the motionless, gray waves, but he did not come.

II.

On the porch in front of the Thompsonville general store stood several men; they were watching the mountain storm. One was a "gay cat" that had drifted into town, in the hope that there might be a job there to suit him; another was a tourist, strayed from the beaten track, and the rest were residents of the little town.

"Why doesn't it rain here?" asked the tourist, watching the leaden blur sweep along the mist-covered mountains.

"Too near the desert," answered Thompson, stepping out of his store as the question was asked. "It gets as near as this some times, but none too often. Wait till the snow's gone from the mountains, and the cool air don't come down here no longer; the desert'll breathe jest once on these pretty flowers you're so stuck on, and blow 'em out like they were jest candles."

"And doesn't it ever rain on the desert?" pursued the tourist, with interest.

"That ain't its habit," declared Thompson. "And if fool prospectors would keep away from it like the rain—"

"Hello, Jack!" exclaimed the "hobo," and the others turned to see whom he greeted.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated the tourist.

The "hobo" had stepped off the porch and was shaking hands with a man that from his dress appeared to be of the same guild; but the face was not of a sort common among the happy-go-lucky laborers. The eyes had a way of searching those which met them, and their expression was of helpless inquiry. His hair was gray and his face furrowed, but other indications of advanced age were lacking. At first glance one might have taken him to be fifty or more, yet on closer inspection he would appear to be barely thirty.

"What's up?" asked Thompson, wondering at the tourist's exclamation.

"It's an escaped lunatic!" gasped the tourist in Thompson's ear as the stranger came up on the porch and passed into the store. He repeated it aloud when the man was out of hearing. "Lunatic nothin'!" retorted the "hobo."

"Well, I saw him in the asylum!" averred the tourist.

"When was this?"

"Last October."

"Well," said the "hobo," smiling, triumphantly, "I worked with him, plowin', all December, in Kern Valley, an' he didn't show none of it. If they did have him in Stockton they didn't have no right to have him there, that's all."

His defense did not quite reassure either the tourist or the others, however, for they edged away from the suspected madman when he came out of the store with some crackers and cheese.

"What brings you here, Jack?" queried the "hobo."

The stranger started, and flushed.

"I think—I've—been—here—before," he said, slowly, "but I've forgotten."

"The hell you have!" exclaimed the "hobo," scowling at the other men, who were exchanging meaning glances. "Well, that's nothin'; I forget places jest like that, an' never tumble to it that I was in 'em before till three or four days."

"Honest?" asked the stranger eagerly.

"Sure thing! I do that right along, nor I ain't as crazy as some other guys," and he glanced contemptuously at the tourist. "Where you been since you jumped out of Bakersfield, Jack?"

"Working around Riverside, and then over to Ventura; but this is where I wanted to go all the time, only I'd forgotten. I'm going out there," he added, pointing.

"The desert's that way, pardner; better not go too far," warned Thompson.

"The desert? I was there," he responded, with conviction.

"Desert!" cried the tourist, excitedly. "He was yelling 'desert' and 'I've found it,' and 'water' all the time in the asylum!"

"Well, you bet he's all O. K. now or

they wouldn't have let him out," said Thompson, shortly.

The man moved on, walking slowly and gazing about him uncertainly, as if in search of landmarks which had merely been described to him by somebody; yet when he came in sight of the old stage station which had for many years been a ranch-house, he stopped, staring at it as if in partial recognition. Presently, however, he shook his head in bewilderment and impatience at his inability to remember, and went on. By and by, he passed out from among the higher foothills; the desert lay before him. Involuntarily, he threw out his hands, with a cry of terror, and then stood still, his gaze wandering wildly over the gray sea of silence and death.

Suddenly he found himself saying, "Good-by, Jessie; good-by!" and then he musingly repeated the name. "Jessie!"

The sun, gleaming fiery red in the mist as it sank, had plunged into the swirling cloud-banks which shrouded the mountain crests. But now the gray-and-white smother, pierced by a strong wind from the west, rolled apart and the sinking sun shone through, flooding the green hills with yellow light for a moment before the distant snowstorm closed in on it again. In that moment of sunlight a shadow fell on the grass in front of the man beside his own. He started and turned around.

"Jessie!" he cried.

She glared at him, her hands clinched, she was struggling to denounce him in words, but choked and could not speak. He read the accusation in her eyes, wonderment and dismay growing in his own.

"I was going. Jessie," he began, tentatively appealing; "I went, didn't I? I think I lost my way." He put his hand to his forehead, and cried out in torment: "Jessie! did I go? Did I dream it?"

But the girl did not answer; she had dropped on her knees, bowing her head in her arms. He bent over, clasping her around the waist, and raising her up.

"Don't cry, darling," he said, soothingly: "I won't go."